BREAKTHROUGHS AND DISCOVERIES IN THEATRE REHEARSALS:

AN ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY OF *CLOSE QUARTERS*

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This work or any part thereof has not previously been presented in any form to the University or to any other body whether for the purposes of assessment, publication or for any other purpose (unless otherwise indicated). Save for any express acknowledgments, references and/or bibliographies cited in the work, I confirm that the intellectual content of the work is the result of my own efforts and of no other person.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis contributes to the emerging field of rehearsal studies by examining the seldom-analysed (yet oft-referenced) moments of a text based theatre rehearsal where breakthroughs occur that advance the creative process.

This thesis presents an original framework through which text-based rehearsal breakthroughs which concentrate primarily on the dynamic between the actor, director and text can be viewed, categorised, and ultimately analysed as 'The Four Lenses of Breakthrough'. An ethnographic methodology is utilised to analyse data collected from a case study observation of the breakthroughs in the rehearsal period of Kate Bowen's new play *Close Quarters* (2018). This thesis sharpens the language used to articulate these moments by creating a practical framework for rehearsal observation and analysis. The *Four Lenses* created are: (1) individual and small recognition moments that occur; (2) individual discoveries for actors and directors; (3) collective discoveries shared by actors and directors; (4) and, finally, a 'wow' moment shared by all, where all the variables coalesce.

This thesis builds upon the work of scholars and practitioners whose objective has been to demystify the rehearsal period and to break apart the myth that the rehearsal room is a place of magic, and a mysterious place. With the expansion of rehearsal studies as a field within Western theatre, as well as performance studies since the 1970s, this thesis sits within the critical field of rehearsal studies, and argues for the importance of examining moments of breakthrough in rehearsal. The thesis attests that breakthroughs are unpredictable in a rehearsal period. Even with their ubiquitous occurrence in rehearsals, there is nevertheless a paucity in the literature of explicit analysis of breakthroughs; this thesis also draws together the extant literature as well as offering a new method of analysis.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.0 THAT'S IT!

> Dylan Wood [actor] asks where to put the emphasis on the line "Do you think I'd tell?", Kate Wasserberg [director] doesn't give a line reading but gives context: "You've really liked, *secretly* really liked her for a year. You'd never ever betray her trust. But this is so special." This has a knock-on effect; Wood starts playing around with the emphasis and then plays on each word of the line and hits the emphasis on the word *tell.* Suddenly Wood shouts "Yes!" He jumps into the air.
>
> Bethan Dawson [deputy stage manager], Wasserberg and Jessie Haughton-Shaw [assistant director] simultaneously cry out using words such as "yeah" and "yes".
>
> Wood (*beaming and grinning*): "I heard it... I heard it… I heard it".
>
> (Field Notes, 2018, l.1556-1563)[1]

This thesis examines and analyses the role of breakthroughs in the rehearsal room of *Close Quarters.* Above is just one of numerous examples of a breakthrough transcribed from field jottings of the ethnographic observation of Out of Joint Theatre Company and Sheffield Theatre's 2018 co-production of Kate Bowen's play *Close Quarters,* a fictional account of the first British women soldiers on the front line of combat.

The genesis of this thesis lies in a practical problem encountered on the rehearsal room floor whilst I was working at a drama school in the United Kingdom in 2011. Working as a director since the late 1990s and as an academic since 2008, I was invited to guest-direct Allan Kenward's war-time drama *Cry Havoc* at The Arden School of Theatre in Manchester. During one rehearsal, a breakthrough was made that was evidently useful. 'That's

[1] Since my field notes of my observation of *Close Quarters* provide one of the primary, original cornerstones of this research, they are referred throughout the text as 'Field Notes', with the accompanying line number of my transcript for reference.

it!', I recall exclaiming to the company. Yet when asked by one reflective student, I was unable to articulate an answer as to why that 'was it'. My own interest in when, how and why actors and directors make breakthroughs during a rehearsal of a text-based production process was born.

1.1 DEFINING A BREAKTHROUGH

According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, a breakthrough is 'a sudden advancement in knowledge, achievement etc; a development or discovery that removes an obstacle to process' (1989, II, p.517), and this thesis uses 'breakthrough' as an umbrella term throughout. Yet theatre practitioners differ on defining this ubiquitous moment. Stephanie French and Philip Bennett's definition of inspiration as a starting point for the rehearsal room breakthrough is 'a realisation of great clarity – an 'aha' moment when something that had been challenging is deeply understood' (French and Bennett, 2016, p.2). This definition, however, is contradicted by theatre director Dominic Dromgoole, when he states of his 2014 Globe Theatre production of *Hamlet* that '*Hamlet* will never stand waiting for us; it will always demand fresh understanding. The moment of "aha! I've got it" will never arrive, nor should it' (Dromgoole, 2017, p.10). It is clear that contradictions abound in the definition and terminology of a 'breakthrough'. This thesis navigates those definitions, and posits a framework of observational analysis for future researchers undertaking ethnographic studies of rehearsal rooms examining breakthroughs, by sharpening the language used.

Director Hugh Morrison describes the moment of discovery as the 'it' moment, warning us starkly: 'woe betide the director if he misses the moment […] "It" is something instinctive, something that feels right to the actor and director' (Morrison, 1984, p.105). However, whilst Morrison describes the rehearsal as the most important part of the process, he devotes only twelve pages, out of over one hundred and thirty, to the

rehearsal process in his text *Directing in the Theatre*. Scant detail of how to build up to an 'it' moment, or indeed of what to do when an actor has a moment of inspiration, is articulated, except to say 'the actor must be encouraged to pursue the hunch' (Morrison, 1984, p.105), which provides little practical insight.

This introductory chapter outlines the background to my interest in this field, how it developed and the research questions guiding the methods of approach. It also gives an overview of the critical frame of rehearsal studies, within which this thesis sits. The chapter briefly introduces the qualitative ethnographic methodology and corresponding methods that are employed for this thesis, and finally charts an outline of the overall chapter structure.

1.1.1 CONTEXT

My inability in the *Cry Havoc* rehearsal room in Manchester to articulate the importance of the 'aha' moment for the actors was *my* breakthrough moment. Reflecting on that moment was frustrating; as a director, I know that breakthroughs occur frequently. In that particular rehearsal room, there was a tacit feeling that we *had* made a breakthrough, yet none of the company (third year actors in training and myself, with fifteen years professional theatre directing experience at the time), could articulate with clarity the context of that particular moment, and how (more importantly) this could be used to build upon further in our next rehearsal. My previous MA study (Middlesex University 2012) undertook further examination of breakthrough moments, and as part of this research, several actors were interviewed who could not reflect on their own practice, nor indeed attempt to articulate their breakthrough moments. Not being able to articulate verbally what is happening in the rehearsal room is due to a directorial approach of wanting to shut down discussion, since there can be

> […] a tendency towards a kinaesthetic learning orientation in actors [which] is further reinforced by the oft-repeated exhortation of "show me, don't tell me!" in actor training which prioritises embodied experience over narrated information.
>
> (Kemp, 2012, p.14)

The actors of the 2012 study positioned their work as almost magical, and worried that if they began to unpack their practice, their implicit natural talent may be lost: if they committed their intuition to words, they would 'lose their talent'. Aoife Monks refers to the 'uncertainty of the acting profession [and the] anxieties produced by the work of theatre' (Monks, 2013, p.147). These anxieties were spilling into the actors' process of work. This confirmed my initial breakthrough moment. Yet Chapter 2 of this thesis identifies that 'aha' moments in rehearsals *are* recognised by theatre practitioners, and in the concluding chapter, this thesis argues that theatre-making is a series of practical and workmanlike steps, albeit non-linear, and that being able to articulate the 'how and why' of a breakthrough moment may indeed strengthen, as opposed to dilute, an actor's practice. The study concentrates primarily on the interaction between actor and director and their text in rehearsals. Whilst reference is made to other areas of the rehearsal process (music, fight and movement direction and design), these are concentrated upon in relation to their impact on the actors and directors within the rehearsal room. Chapter 8.4 posits further research which includes all of the production team.

Rehearsal studies academic Kate Rossmanith states that 'as practitioners rehearse, they do not describe in detail what it is they are doing […] They just do the work' (Rossmanith, 2008, p.142). Echoing the interviews with actors described above, Rossmanith is alluding to the fact that many actors (whilst they have an embodied practice), do not always verbally articulate their methodology and have a tacit embodiment of ideas ontologically. In an interview for this thesis with European theatre and opera

director Katie Mitchell, she stated that in a rehearsal you have to 'deliver, not discover' (2015, 82). Mitchell is classed as an auteur director, and whilst this study does not examine auteur directors, she does have strong opinions regarding the role of breakthroughs and discoveries in the rehearsal room. In her text *The Director's Craft,* Mitchell warns of not building a rehearsal process around 'the search for a sudden revelatory discovery or epiphany that will unlock everything' (2009, p.115); but, when such discoveries do happen, they are from a position of the practitioner having embodied knowledge that is felt and expressed. This thesis posits that whilst delivery is important, a deeper understanding of the 'aha' moment may also support practitioners in creating an atmosphere where breakthroughs and discoveries can be made, and that practitioners can reflect upon and build out from that during the next rehearsal. The argument that acting is, of course, 'above all intuitive' (Benedetti, in Jackson, 2013, p.246) is all well and good; yet how do actors and directors know when their intuition is 'right' for that moment, and when it supports the direction of travel for the rehearsal of a particular play? That is the question that this thesis answers.

If practitioners do not discuss their discoveries explicitly, then they are embodying their knowledge implicitly as there is a 'physical manifestation of years of professional theatre experience involving very practical knowledge' (Rossmanith, 2003, p.57). Yet, actor-trainer Uta Hagen believes the importance of articulation in the rehearsal and acting process, stating: 'I soon learned that anything I was unable to verbalise or explain usually related to areas of confusion or muddiness in my own techniques' (Hagen, 1991, p.xxii). This thesis posits that there can be a certain amount of clarity.

1.1.2 SCOPE AND DELIMITATIONS

This study relates specifically to text based theatre-making processes through the study of one rehearsal process that is embedded within a director-led rehearsal model. The parameters of the study, and therefore its findings, is bounded by its position within a text-based rehearsal

methodology, whereby actors inter-relate with their director in the producing of a pre-existing playtext that has been constructed prior to rehearsal with a 'world' created by a director and designer. This study makes no claims to be applicable to other forms of rehearsal processes, such as devising or approaches to more postdramatic theatre texts, or even fields such as musical theatre, as it is based in a Stanislavskian system of text based drama rehearsals, albeit in a contemporary manifestation. Neither does it claim to be applicable to other forms of rehearsals within the arts, such as dance or music. This study does not seek to demonstrate applicability or generalisability other than to research the processes leading to revelation within this particular text-based production of *Close Quarters*, which is the scope of the research. The research avoids making grand claims but the findings may also be informative to other cognate studies.

Chapter 3 identifies the nature of this ethnographic account using a case study approach of one particular rehearsal process and its culture. The study does not create a scientific approach to applying this to other text based rehearsal structures, but humbly encourages practitioners and academics to understand the important role of breakthroughs in the ongoing theatre-making process and Chapter 8 outlines the potential for future research opportunities and applications.

1.2 LOCATING A METHODOLOGY

In the light of opposing ideas around the importance and the articulation of breakthroughs, using a detailed ethnographic observational study (placing myself as an outside researcher/observer in another practitioner's rehearsal room) is of immense value in order collect data in the pursuit of answering the current research questions outlined in 1.3 below.

Martin Hammersley and Paul Atkinson argue that 'methods must be collected according to purposes' (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983, p.x). As rehearsal rooms are creative, fluid spaces, a qualitative methodology became

an appropriate way of capturing, via observation, the 'chaotic business of rehearsals' (Crawford, 2015, p.195). Ethnographic observation (further detail and methods are discussed in Chapter 3) over the extended rehearsal period of five weeks for *Close Quarters* enabled the research to 'take multiple others into account and [to] resist prior constructions' (Grills, 1998, p.15), as this cannot be done through interviews and secondary research methods alone. Gay McAuley states:

> What you can get from [rehearsal] documents is fascinating, being a detective and undertaking a forensic process, and that can produce some valuable work; but to me the real rehearsal insights and the description of the rehearsal process is only possible if there's an observer who is there.
>
> (McAuley, 2019, l.89-92)

The only way to gain rich data into breakthroughs inside rehearsal rooms is therefore to be inside of one, as qualitative data aims to 'describe and explore phenomena' (Birks and Mills, 2015, p.16) and therefore allows for the story of the rehearsal room to be explained. David Fetterman (1998) comments that when using qualitative methods, the general picture reaffirms itself over and over again (in this case, over five weeks) and therefore more reliable conclusions can be drawn. Judith Ackroyd and John O'Toole defend the use of the qualitative methodology over quantitative approaches, stating: 'the academic battle to recognise in research the subjective, ambiguous and dynamic nature of human social behaviour and the possibility of multiple and even conflicting truths has been won' (Ackroyd and O'Toole, 2010, p.28).

Qualitative methodology concerns collecting and analysing data from a non-numerical perspective,

> encompassing such designs as ethnography, case study analysis, and historical or document analysis […] knowledge consists of understanding and […] the goal of research is the examination of processes.

(LeCompte and Preissle, 2003, p.46)

To unpack the above quotation in relation to this thesis, my observation (ethnographically) of the *Close Quarters* production (as a case study), is triangulated via document analysis (of notebooks and scripts), and validated by interviews enabling an understanding of the process of rehearsal and the genesis of creative decision making to be formed.

Although qualitative research methodologies are 'the so-called "norm"' (Silverman, 2013, p.12) in social sciences and humanities, that is not the prime reason for using this methodology. The desire for a narrative approach to writing up (also outlined in Chapter 3) is enabled via a qualitative approach. Through the process of observing the actors and director at work, the thesis has been able 'to uncover, make accessible, and reveal the meanings (realities)' (Jorgensen, 1990, p.15) of this specific rehearsal room.

The reason for choosing *Close Quarters* is outlined in detail in Chapter 3, but at the heart of the decision was the need to observe a text-based rehearsal process, wherein a director and their actors could be witnessed working together collaboratively, as opposed to an *auteur* director figure, whose conceptual design work and pre-rehearsal decisions may have dwarfed the rehearsal room process and not given as much agency to its actors. Chapter 2's Literature Review does reference auteur text-based directors such as Jan Fabre, Elizabeth LeCompte, Mitchell and Ariane Mnouchkine within the context of their contribution to the study of rehearsals. They are also referenced as a direct result of what they personally have contributed in terms of discussions or references to breakthroughs, or academics have observed about their processes. However, as director Wasserberg stated in her pre-rehearsal interview, 'my heartbeat is a collaborative process [as an] actor's director' (Wasserberg, 2018, 1405).[2]

[2] All personal communication, as well as interviews conducted with practitioners, are referenced with the year and line number of my own transcripts of those interviews and correspondences.

Wasserberg also stated the importance of the text, as opposed to any directorial concept, being at the centre of the work:

> Out of Joint's work is characterised by putting the words and the text at the centre, with excellent performances that are detailed and motivated and joyous and free. The director is essentially invisible. What I and the company have in common is that moments of visual innovation have come necessarily from the text. It's not about me demonstrating my skill or putting something on top of the play. The production grows up and out through the play. I think that telling the story clearly and well, joyously, and in a way that is intended to communicate and give pleasure to an audience, is what Out of Joint do, with great actors who operate without ego and are interested in telling the story.
>
> (Wasserberg, 2018, l.192-199)

The process of observing and examining breakthroughs needed to have, at the very least, the potential for witnessing actors and the director working collaboratively to examine the genesis of a moment without privileging the directorial voice. This is as opposed to an auteur director figure having preconceived what they wanted, where breakthroughs would mainly relate to the directorial role.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND CRITICAL FRAMEWORKS

This thesis primarily identifies when, why, and how rehearsal room breakthroughs potentially arise, and secondly, how they might be articulated and 'captured' by directors and actors, before the decision is made – often by the director – to move on to another bit[3] or scene. On this basis, and presupposing that there is a snowballing of ideas within the rehearsal

[3] 'Bit' is the simple term coined by Constantin Stanislavski for a section of script.

journey, the following primary research question is at the heart of this thesis:

How do breakthroughs shape and inform the ongoing theatre-making process[4] and the final production?

The following subsidiary questions are constructed in order to answer the primary research question above:

i) What counts as a breakthrough?
ii) When might breakthroughs occur in a rehearsal process?
iii) How, why, and for whom might it be ascertained a breakthrough is meaningful?
iv) What levels of awareness of breakthrough moments might participants have, both during the rehearsal process, and upon reflection?

In order to answer these questions (which form Chapters 4 to 7), it must be noted that there is one critical frame within which this thesis primarily operates: the emerging field of rehearsal studies. So as to place this thesis into this context, prior to presenting and reviewing the core literature, this chapter now presents an overview of this field.

1.4 REHEARSAL STUDIES 1: A CRITICAL FRAME

The emerging academic field of rehearsal studies, which originated in Australia in the 1970s, aims to demystify a rehearsal's often private process through using recognised research methodologies, such as ethnography. As the field's exponent Gay McAuley points out,

> it is a somewhat surprising fact that notwithstanding a century or so of scholarly concern with theatrical performance, relatively little has

[4] As stated in 1.1.1 and 1.1.2 above, this thesis concentrates primarily on the interaction between directors and actors and their text. It is this area of the theatre-making process which this study relates to.

been written about the rehearsal practices from which these performances emerge.

(McAuley, 2012, p.3)

Whilst there has been substantial reference to rehearsals in acting and directing texts, mainly from Constantin Stanislavski's watershed text *An Actor Prepares* (1936) onwards, examining the genetics of a creative rehearsal process has only been studied as an academic field in an Anglo-American context since early exponent McAuley began ethnographic practices of rehearsals at the University of Sydney in the 1970s. This 'emerging field' (McAuley, 2006, p.7) is now gathering traction within academia, including the *Tracing Creation* 2016 international conference in Antwerp, which positioned rehearsal studies at the heart of its agenda. McAuley outlines in detail the emergence of the field in her journal article for *About Performance*, entitled 'The Emerging Field of Rehearsal Studies' (2006), citing how rehearsal observations began to formalise from the early 1970s onwards, thanks to journalists such as David Selbourne and actors such as Antony Sher. McAuley asserts that academics such as Shomit Mitter (1992), Tiffany Stern (2000) and Josette Féral (2008) began subsequently to lay some firmer foundations for this field.

1.4.1 REHEARSAL ORIGINS AND DEFINITIONS

Rehearsals have been taking place since the formalisation of storytelling in the Greek period, but in the way that we may now recognise them, did not begin until the Early Modern period, notably in line with the professionalisation of theatre in London of the 1560s, and the arrival of permanent playhouses.[5] It is not helpful to transpose modern thinking and terminology around rehearsals onto the period prior to this, as it was not

[5] This line of argument is pursued in the seminal work of Stern (2000).

until the rise of the professional director in the mid-nineteenth century that the formalisation of the rehearsal period began. When the term 'rehearsal' first came into usage explicitly in a theatre sense is difficult to ascertain, although the *Oxford English Dictionary* refers to Thomas Sharp's dissertation reference (1825), concerning the Coventry Mystery play cycles; this relates to a note from 1490, where the Smith family list their expenses in preparing their play cycle: 'this is the expens of the furste reherse of our players in ester weke' (1989, XIII, p.529). Aiming to further clarify when the term 'rehearsal' came into usage, theatre scholar Tiffany Stern posits that early theatre rehearsal derives from the verb 'to recite' from the schoolroom, where 'children learnt to rehearse, repeat or say over their lessons' (Stern, 2000, p.24) and from the noun whereby in church a passage was repeated from a previous sermon. This philosophy of simple repetition in preparation for a performance of sorts was thereby transposed into the rehearsals of Early Modern Drama. There is no need to repeat the excellent scholarship of Stern for this thesis, as her text *Rehearsal from Shakespeare to Sheridan* (2000) documents in depth the British rehearsal practices and processes of the 16th to 18th Century, asserting that the forms of rehearsal during that period were very different to those of contemporary Western text-based theatre practice. For example, Stern ensures that we understand that the major usage of the term 'rehearsal' during Renaissance theatre was that of a 'practice and approval of text' (Stern, 2000, p.26), mainly in front of the town's mayor. Since the removal in the United Kingdom in 1968 of the need to submit all new plays to the Lord Chamberlain's Office for approval, it can be argued that we have not needed this stage of rehearsal. Throughout this thesis, I refer to rehearsals through the lens of Western contemporary text-based, character-driven rehearsal theatre practice. In the United Kingdom, for example, this relates to the three-to-four-week rehearsal process that settled following the demise of fortnightly rep in the 1970s. Yet this is merely one model, and each country has its own form and culture of rehearsal practice. The formalisation of a director figure during the late 19th Century, which was cemented throughout the 20th Century, is seminal in shaping an

understanding of the rehearsal process. Directors such as Peter Brook wrote accounts of ideal rehearsal strategies. *The Empty Space* affirms that 'a director learns that the growth of rehearsals is a developing process; he sees that there is a right time for everything, and his art is the art of recognizing these moments' (Brook, 2008, p.118) and that, in rehearsal, 'form and content have to be examined sometimes together, sometimes separately' (Brook, 2008, p.138). Through the writing of theatre, it is the director who therefore primarily defines rehearsals.

1.4.2 CONTEMPORARY DEFINITIONS OF 'REHEARSAL'

> The French word *répétition* is already the kiss of death for anything that wishes to be fresh each time. But it is worse in English.
>
> A rehearsal. Do we ever pause to listen to this awesome word? Crouched in the middle, between the 're' and the 'l', is the hearse, the wagon that carries the lifeless body to the grave.
>
> (Brook, 2019)

If international theatre director Peter Brook is not happy with the term itself from the English or the French, let us begin with the Russian approaches, where for Stanislavski, rehearsal concerned 'ploughing and sowing […] and then gather[ing] the fruit' (Stanislavski, 2008, p.139), which has its origins in the 13th Century agricultural term, where 'the word "rehearsal" relates to […] agricultural practice *hercier*, [where] they dragged on the ground and raked the soil' (McAuley, 2019, 12). Russian director Lev Dodin is similar to Brook, and does not 'like the word *repetitsiya* ["rehearsal"] which comes from the French *répétition* and which implies repeating something learnt, internalised and remembered' (Innes and Shevtsova, 2009, p.44), even though director Anne Bogart states that 'it can be argued that the art of rehearsal is the art of repetition' (Bogart, 2001, p.45). McAuley states that whilst,

> the German word is *Probe*, and the French is "to repeat", but rehearsal is all of those things: the trying out and the finding and then

> finding ways to repeat, and to repeat safely. What you may do in rehearsal can be dangerous, so you have to find ways emotionally and physically to protect yourself, so you can do it night after night.
>
> (McAuley, 2019, 24)

Dodin's preference is for the Russian term *proby*: a probing and an investigation of the text where exploration is foregrounded over the discovery of something that is definite. Indeed, many of Dodin's plays remain in repertoire with his company, The Maly Theatre, for several years, allowing actors to continue a journey of *proby*. Academic Jen Harvie aligns with this, as she supports the creation notion: rehearsals are not 'for repetition of learned delivery but the *creation* of a performance' (2010: p.1). Uta Hagen also prefers the 'German *die Probe*, which sounds like what a rehearsal ought to be: the probe! I want to probe, to test, to try, to adventure' (Harvie and Lavender, 2008, p.190), and Bogart recalls that 'in Japanese, *keiko* translates to practice' (Bogart, 2001, p.45). Current artistic director of Leeds Playhouse, James Brining, states in his column for *The Stage* newspaper that 'every rehearsal [is] an enquiry, not just into the questions posed by the show we [are] working on, but into the process of theatre-making itself' (Brining, 2018), clearly articulating the need for exploration of both text and also the way in which the production is created.

Stern, in an attempt to add nuance to the definition, describes the different types of rehearsal that can be undertaken as either 'private rehearsal, partial rehearsal, group rehearsal, dress rehearsal and technical rehearsal' (Stern, 2000, p.6). She continues by stating that the partial rehearsal (where actors are split-called, only to rehearse the sections or scenes that they are involved in) is where most 'aha' moments are potentially made about the play by the actor and director. This thesis disagrees with Stern as the ethnographic observed experiences outlined in Chapters 5 and 6 attest to breakthroughs that are made both in and outside of the partial rehearsals at any time. This also includes at each stage, from

pre-rehearsal preparation through to performance, and during the run. Terence Crawford's definition of a 'sub-rehearsal' is useful here, as a

> moment that occurs outside the specific organised schedule of the rehearsal, outside the direct interrogatory gaze of the director, or beyond or beneath the understood agenda of a rehearsal moment.
>
> (Crawford, 2015, p.187)

This thesis returns several times to moments outside of the contact that actors have with a formal rehearsal period, as set down by Stern above, and will use Crawford's term 'sub-rehearsal' to describe such moments. Gary Sloan provokes us to reconsider the notion of rehearsal in his call for arms: 'Hold on. Adjustment. There isn't *any* time spent with script that is *outside* of rehearsal! [An actor's] time with the script is the *heart* of […] rehearsal' (Sloan, 2012, p.17), suggesting there is no separation between the sub-rehearsal and the formal rehearsal with a director present.

In continuing to sharpen the definition of the term rehearsal, it is useful to ascertain what can actually happen within one. American director Anne Bogart states that, in a rehearsal,

> an actor searches for shapes that can be repeated. Actors and directors together are constructing a framework that will allow for endlessly new currents of vital life-force, emotional vicissitudes and connection with other actors […] Paradoxically it is the restrictions, the precision, the exactitude, that allows for the possibility of freedom.
>
> (Bogart, 2001, p.46)

For practitioner and academic Bella Merlin, 'collectively we want to work out how to tell the story. Individually [as actors] we want to build our particular characters' (Merlin, 2016, p.147). Director Thomas Ostermeier states that his goal of rehearsals is that of 'transform[ing] language into action' (Ostermeier, 2016, p.147) and, for Simon McBurney, it is not about having

ideas, but about 'finding how to transmit them' (McBurney, in Warren-Fisher, 2010, p.115). All of the above practitioners affirm, through their writing, that there is an end point to the rehearsal work which, through repetition and moving the language from page to stage via the actor's body, is eventually transmitted to an audience.

British theatre director Mike Alfreds alludes to the rehearsal process as a 'mystery' (Alfreds, 2010, p.27), yet his text *Different Every Night* contradicts this, as he is at pains to demystify this 'complex relationship between a group of people struggling to create something three dimensional' (Alfreds, 2010, p.27). Director Brook, cited in Mitter, states that 'the work of rehearsals is looking for meaning and then making it meaningful' (Mitter, 1992, p.26). Rehearsals are, according to Di Trevis, intended 'to discover how to do the play' (Manfull, 1999, p.106), as opposed to Mitchell who uses her workshop period prior to rehearsals to make these discoveries; rehearsals become 'workmanlike [with] mechanical components, it has an odd surprise but that's just a side order, not the main meal, and I have to deliver the main meal' (Mitchell, 2015, 113).

Alongside the rise of University Drama Departments since the 1960s, theatre academics began to take an interest in the creation of a piece of theatre. If we posit that meaning-making is what rehearsals are for, to discover the 'theatrical truth' (Rossmanith, 2003, p.177) of a moment, we see that the genesis of this meaning began to be studied and captured. It could be said that it is unsurprising that the rise of the study of theatre within universities saw an increase in academic texts on acting and directing, with a focus on rehearsals from the 1960s onwards. Bella Merlin's *Acting: The Basics* recounts director Max Stafford-Clark's description of the rehearsal room 'as either a magical world like a second childhood or a prison camp' (Merlin, 2010, p.93), before articulating less poetically that rehearsals are to,

> collectively map out the territory of the fictional world; (2) to tell the writer's story as clearly as possible; and (3) to create characters who seem plausible within the dramatic style of the piece.

(Merlin, 2010, p.93)

However, like Brook in *The Empty Space*, Merlin does not give her reader concrete examples through which these are discovered or undertaken. Alfreds, in *Different Every Night*, states categorically that:

> the purpose of [a] rehearsal process is to immerse the actors so thoroughly in the world of the play that they'll have the complete confidence and ability to play freshly, with freedom and spontaneity, at every performance, living in the moment, in a continuous creative flow, able to adapt to – and absorb – change, variation and discovery.
>
> (Alfreds, 2007, p.141)

1.5 REHEARSAL STUDIES 2: AN EMERGING ACADEMIC FIELD

> Much thought has gone into the deepening of the craft of acting in Western theatre over the past century, [but] how much of that thought has affected the craft of rehearsal? Not nearly enough.
>
> (Christie, 2015, p.168)

Paul Christie forcefully acknowledges that rehearsals have been overlooked by academics, and theatre critic Sarah Hemming states that 'for anyone not involved in the theatre, what goes on in the rehearsal room is a bit of a mystery' (Hemming, 2002, p.7). In 2001 Dale Lorraine Wright argued that 'theatre rehearsal needs to be discussed, [as] literature on theatre rehearsal is limited and sketchy at best' (Wright, 2001, p.24). This thesis draws together the extant literature on rehearsals in Chapter 2.

Rehearsal studies also houses what is termed 'genetic studies' in French theatre scholarship. This includes the study of all the documents of a performance and creative process, which is separate from the ethnographic rehearsal room observation pioneered by McAuley. French genetic theatre studies academic Josette Féral begins her 2008 work with a series of questions relating to rehearsal room discoveries: 'What led the director and

the actors to this transformation? […] What discussions led to these choices?' (Féral, 2008, p.224). I take 'transformation' to be the 'aha' moment, which Avra Sidiropoulou believes the director is chasing, as they need to be 'especially sensitive to […] epiphanies' (Sidiropoulou, 2019, p.7). Yet Féral relates this to epiphany moments that occur *prior* to rehearsals, not during them, in the pre-production, inspirational stage of mining the text for possibilities.

Féral's reliance on the assistant director's notes from productions (equivalent to the British deputy stage manager's 'book') is difficult to accept without a link to an ethnographic study of the rehearsal in question, as this is a subjective end-result; or practical account of moments, blocking and decision-making. Féral herself also questions this, asking 'are they reliable memories, created to last, or are they fleeting points of reference inscribed in the immediacy of the moment?' (Féral, 2008, p.228). Rehearsal notes are made for the simple purpose of the practical running of the production. Stern (2000) refers to the importance of the prompt books between the 16th and 18th Century rehearsal practices in sensing how rehearsals operated, but again cites their limitations as a vehicle for understanding the nature of rehearsals. Féral builds on McAuley's work of rehearsal studies (and cites McAuley as an influence). There are of course some fundamental cultural and practical differences between rehearsals in France and the United Kingdom, yet many principles remain the same. Taking 'genetics' from literature studies and analysing the 'genes' of literary works, she uses this phrase to relate to studying the genetics of the creative process that leads to production (which differs from an ethnographic framework). Challenging the academic Patrice Pavis, Féral states that the creative (rehearsal) process can be on a par with the 'analytical rigour of theatre' (Féral, 1997, p.1) and positions her thinking in relation to that of the work of director Dodin, who believes that discoveries can be made throughout both a long rehearsal period of several years, and continue into the performance. Dodin's work can remain in repertoire at the Maly Theatre indefinitely, allowing for incubation (both conscious and unconscious) to take place. Féral warns us that in the

study of rehearsals, we must not neglect the actual production which 'uphold[s] the arbitrary division between the creative process and the public presentation of a play' (Féral, 1997, p.5). She argues that critics rely too heavily on analysing the end result, ignoring the 'process which gave it meaning' (Féral, 1997, p.5). This thesis regards the end product as part of the creative rehearsal process, rather than separate from it.

Rehearsal studies is growing up as a field, and as it defines itself, other fields are embraced including philosophy, sociology, musicology, scenography, phenomenology, and performance studies, as well as theatre studies. Whilst it is evident that 'there is a pressing need to develop solid methodologies that can enhance the genetic study of the performing arts' (De Laet, Cassiers and van den Dries, 2015), the exponents and contributors to the field are aware of it as a growing, shifting and developing field without fixed boundaries. This was highlighted at the 2016 *Tracing Creation* conference held in Antwerp. As convenor Timmy De Laet argued in his conference paper, 'what can we [as rehearsal scholars] do that isn't to capitalise on the work, but to capture something of the work?' (De Laet, 2016a).

This thesis relates rehearsals to the final production, yet argues that the impact of pre-rehearsal decisions on rehearsal breakthroughs is strong. How have pre-rehearsal decisions, made primarily by directors and designers prior to casting and rehearsals, been documented? Detailed studies recently made of director's notebooks from a range of rehearsal practices from those of Saxe-Meiningen to Jan Fabre by the research team of De Laet, Luk van den Dries and Edith Cassiers (2015) give insight into the meaning-making processes directors undertake in their pre-rehearsal and sub-rehearsal periods. The study of these notebooks at present does not map explicitly onto rehearsal room work, but leapfrogs over the rehearsal period, carrying out its examination in relation to the final production itself, making links between a director's idea with the execution of the play. This research can aid our understanding of the genesis of an idea, but as it does not directly

relate to the pre-rehearsal decisions that impact on rehearsal room choices, is of limited use for the purposes of this thesis. De Laet, Cassiers and van den Dries argue that the German *Regiebuch* (the director's book) is the 'materialised outcome of the emancipation of the director, whose function only emerged when the privileged status of the dramatic author began to erode' (De Laet, Cassiers and van den Dries, 2015, p.45). Their study of Belgian director Jan Fabre's sketches and texts is of note, as it gives an indication of how the director's initial thoughts may then play out in rehearsal; there are, however, no links to rehearsal periods, only to the final production. The annotation of a notebook or text is, therefore,

> a starting point for genuine creation, whereby not only directors but also performers adopt and appropriate material according to the specific needs of performance [and] function as an impetus for the work that goes on in the studio and vice versa, constituting a continuous feedback loop that eventually leads to the staged performance.
>
> (De Laet, Cassiers and van den Dries, 2015, p.51)

Belgian director Ivo van Hove's directorial notebook entries have been published in Bennett and Massai's 2018 text, as a trove of material surrounding this iconoclastic director; yet these are not contextualised by the editors in relation to his finished productions, nor his rehearsal period. This thesis builds bridges between these component elements, since the complete through-line of pre- to post-rehearsal has not, at present, been overtly researched in depth, failing to bring us close to how decisions directly relate to rehearsal room breakthroughs.

The rise of genetic and rehearsal studies as fields in the understanding of creation should begin to narrow the gap between the scholar and the practitioner and find usage for what is explored on the rehearsal room floor. These fields could thereby inspire academics who are also practitioners to find ways to analyse rehearsals, not in a generic

ethnographic way, but rather by creating a systematic approach to capturing what might be happening for actors and directors. Discussed further in Chapter 3 on methodologies, this is presented as a framework, as part of the conclusions in Chapter 8.

1.6 ORIGINALITY

Whilst most ethnographic accounts of rehearsals concentrate on the rehearsal room process itself (and rightly so), this study is original in that it also draws on how pre-rehearsal ideas and discoveries by the creative team influence choices in rehearsals, which in turn impact on the final production and its *mise-en-scène*[6], doing so through a privileged lens of observing rehearsals of *Close Quarters* for five weeks.

There is a key difference between building something and discovering something. According to Rossmanith (2003), discovery means that there is something to be found, following the building up and creating through hard work, craft and technique. Detailed in the literature review (Chapter 2), an 'aha' discovery moment is a result of a steady and considered conscious work. McAuley (2015) describes a difference between 'aha' and 'wow'; the former are smaller moments of discovery described by Stanislavski in all but name in his text *Creating a Role*, whereby intuition and inspiration come from 'conscious, preparatory work' (Stanislavski, 2008, p.8). The 'wow' however, occurs often from the observer's perspective, where all smaller component parts come together in a unified whole and 'all the disparate insights into the play coalesce into a unified aesthetic' (French and Bennett, 2016, p.7). As there has been a lack of critical attention paid explicitly to breakthrough moments in rehearsals, this thesis brings together much of the extant literature throughout Chapter 2 and details how breakthroughs sit in relation to the shoulders this thesis stands upon. There is much synthesis of

[6] From the French, 'placing on stage' referring to the scenographic and design elements of the production.

the literature, and a drawing together through this study of the various themes and ideas that are often hidden or tacit within other works. The thesis also sharpens terminology, as academics and practitioners use interchangeable terms for these moments of discovery, as seen throughout this chapter itself. Using the framework through which I observed *Close Quarters*, I argue for a sharpening of the terminology and a potential set of definitions for these through four lenses, using 'breakthrough' as the umbrella term. The breakthroughs are viewed through these four lenses: (1) individual and small recognition moments; (2) individual discoveries; (3) collective discoveries; (4) finally, the 'wow' moment. These are detailed in Figure 1 below. These four categorisations aim for specificity, in terms of what is being viewed as a breakthrough at any given moment.

Lens	Description	Definition Summary	*Oxford English Dictionary* **Definitions**
ONE	Individual moments of recognition.	The individual recognition moments that happen for an actor or the director in the rehearsal.	Recognition is 'the mental process of identifying what has been known before' (1989, VIII, p.341).
TWO	'Aha': an individual discovery moment by an actor or director.	This is a moment of individual discovery where new knowledge is gained.	Discovery is 'the action of discovering. Verb. 1. Find something unexpectedly in the course of a search. 2. Gain knowledge about or become aware of' (1989, IV, p.753).
THREE	'Aha': a collective discovery moment.	This is a moment of shared discovery (for example, between actor and director or actor and actor), where new knowledge is gained.	As above.
FOUR	The collective 'wow' moment.	This is a breakthrough moment where there is a collective 'rightness' and ownership, not of a small moment, but of a whole bit, scene or entire production following a run-through or performance.	Wow 'chiefly express[es] astonishment or admiration' (1989, XX, p.595).

Figure 1: 'The Four Lenses of Breakthrough'

1.7 LOOKING AHEAD

The substantial body of work that exists on acting, directing and rehearsals is (re)examined, via the lens of breakthrough, and Chapter 2 thereby examines the extant literature. This begins through a neuroscientific lens of what happens within the body when an 'aha' moment occurs; what may be the trigger for such moments, and how scientists have aimed to define them. This leads into how 'aha' moments are manifested within rehearsals using the critical framework of rehearsal studies. As actors are not always forthcoming in articulating their practice or moments of discovery, Chapter 2 examines some possible reasons for the importance of being able to do so.

Chapter 3 lays out the methodological approach undertaken: that of the ethnographic study of qualitative data collection, using the principal method of observation verified through interviews with participants. The reasons for localising this thesis to one case study of *Close Quarters* in 2018 and the choice of methods is also discussed. Building on the premise that this is a case study, as opposed to a scientific quantitative approach, (such as Porter's 1975 study discussed below), the chapter identifies reasons for not using certain methods (such as video recordings) and discusses how the data presented in the later chapters has been analysed. Drawing on the studies of anthropologist Clifford Geertz, and his work on thick description from the 1970s, Chapter 3 articulates the reasons for choosing a narrative presentation of the data analysis using, at times, a more relaxed tone than is presented in Chapters 4 to 6. Finally, ethical considerations and the issues of any internal conflict that I had in my role as a researcher (whilst also being a theatre practitioner) are discussed.

Contextualisation of *Close Quarters* as a play and its various draft stages, the overall production, and the producing company sets the scene for Chapter 4. Each of the actors are introduced, plus the key creative team consisting of director, dramaturg, and writer together with their philosophies of approach and backgrounds are articulated. The directorial pre-rehearsal

frames are presented, which form the basis of rehearsal room decision verification. These frames set the boundaries for what takes place in a rehearsal, against which the efficacy of a breakthrough may be measured. Chapter 4 concludes with the introduction in further detail of the four lenses through which rehearsal breakthroughs may be defined, and pursues a formalised definition of interchangeable terms, in order provide clarity to the obfuscation discussed in Chapter 2.

Individuality is at the heart of Chapter 5, which analyses the data of the first two sets of individual lenses: when actors and the director had small individual moments of recognition and larger, yet still individual, discovery moments. This chapter therefore begins the analytical narrative report of the data gathered through the five-week observation, coupled with verification of my observations through the post-rehearsal period interviews. Chapter 6 builds on this, giving accounts of collective or shared moments of discovery and the major 'wow' moment, where the whole company shared and articulated a satisfaction following a breakthrough, as many of the disparate elements of the rehearsal process coalesced.

Chapters 5 and 6 narrate the findings of the research period in relation to the research questions and the wider literature, positioning the research within the critical framework of rehearsal studies introduced earlier in this chapter. Chapter 7 draws together the data findings as each of the subsidiary research questions are explored in turn, prior to presenting an argument to answer the major enquiry question of 'how breakthroughs shape and inform the ongoing theatre-making process and the final production'.

The conclusions in Chapter 8 point to the value of this research in terms of its originality (as summarised in 1.5 above) and set the stage for several possible further areas of research. The chapter finally also outlines some potential limitations in this research, and the reasons for this.

The thesis establishes there needs to be a sharpening in the analysis of breakthrough moments in rehearsal, and that certain magical, nebulous and sometimes neurotic standpoints by which some creative artists have positioned their work remain unhelpful. The potential relevance of this work from both a theoretical viewpoint (in terms of how to analyse rehearsal), as well as in terms of a posited, future practical application of the findings for actors, directors and actor-trainers, concludes the thesis.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 INTRODUCTION

There is not one extant text that examines breakthroughs of rehearsal in an explicit manner. There are, however, numerous texts with salient statements, sections or references to the subject that forms the basis of this chapter, and which builds out from the contextual field of rehearsal studies. There are two parts to this literature review.

Firstly, an examination of the insider and outsider accounts of rehearsal periods, often from a journalistic perspective, highlights that whilst there have been numerous texts observing and writing about rehearsals, these are for a wider audience; only particular limited findings can be drawn from them. Secondly, an examination of the seismic shifts in thinking in relation to 'aha' moments from outside of rehearsal studies explores what counts as a breakthrough for the human experience physiologically. Scientific literature such as Sascha Topolinski and Rolf Reber's (2010) points to the physiological responses of the body at the moments leading up to, during and following a breakthrough. This leads on to an examination of 'flow' as detailed by Mihaly Csíkszentmihályi (1997, 2013), in terms of how achieving this state can support breakthroughs, which is then linked back to rehearsal room practice.

The final part of the review concentrates on pulling together, from the multitudinous theatre studies literature, the ubiquitous yet sporadic ideas, themes and references to breakthroughs. Many acting and directing texts are, by definition, 'how-to' books, concentrating on tangible methods; this thesis re-examines seminal texts from a variety of practitioners such as Uta Hagen (1972), Katie Mitchell (2009), Stanislavski as retranslated by Jean Benedetti (2010), Bella Merlin (2011) and John Gillet (2014) through the lens of how they articulate breakthrough moments (although they interchange the terminology throughout).

Relevant philosophical or conceptual literature on acting and directing is examined alongside the 'how-to' texts. Acting coach Donna Soto-Morrettini's (2010) work examines how we use language such as 'truth', as well as texts by Stanislavski scholars Sharon Carnike (2009) and Rose Wyman (2013) who, along with Merlin (2014), have added to our current understanding of Stanislavski through a re-examining of his archive material.

2.1 INSIDER vs. OUTSIDER ACCOUNTS

By bringing together the disparate references to breakthroughs as referenced across numerous texts, the chapter goes someway to examining, through theoretical inquiry, the subsidiary research questions of 'when might breakthroughs occur in a rehearsal process?' and 'what levels of awareness of breakthrough moments might participants have, both during the rehearsal process and upon reflection?'. Gay McAuley argues,

> What you can get from the documents is fascinating, being a detective and undertaking a forensic process, and that can produce some valuable work, but to me the real rehearsal insights and the description of the rehearsal process is only possible if there's an observer who is there.
>
> (McAuley, 2019, l.88-92)

What can other researchers, practitioners and academics tell us of the creative process by which they have captured rehearsal processes? Any breakthrough moments that are alluded to in these accounts do not give detail as to how and why these moments are found and are 'journalistic rather than academic' (Rossmanith, 2003, p.17). They scratch the surface, leaving the reader to infer any potential reason, and cannot directly answer the research questions. McAuley uses the categories of 'insider vs outsider accounts' (McAuley, 2006, p.11), detailed below, prior to this thesis offering a third category of the 'outsider-outsider' account. The majority of accounts, however, are often journalistically written by directors and actors, not overly

academically structured in tone, and designed to be read by a wide audience. This is not to suggest they are not worthy of study, but they ought to be seen as a prelude to the main literature review, as a means of exploring how rehearsals have been captured from outside the structures of academia.

2.1.1 INSIDER ACCOUNTS

Insider accounts should be read with caution, warns Aoife Monks, suggesting that there may be 'an "inside", authoritative […] voice […] which represents the acting community to the outside world' (Monks, 2013, p.148). The insider accounts present a constructed view from one perspective and must be read as such.

Theatre Quarterly journal's series of 'Production Casebooks' from 1971 to 1976 were an early attempt at formally documenting rehearsals. Whilst presented in an academic journal, they mainly foregrounded directors (with several being written by the assistant directors to William Gaskill, Arnold Wesker and Chares Marowitz, for example) and do not reference 'aha' moments explicitly. There are a few accounts, however, that examine the interaction between actors and directors whilst still focussing on the directorial voice. The Casebook detailing Ingmar Bergman's direction of *The Ghost Sonata* (1973) for the Royal Dramatic Theatre, Sweden, forefronts a one-way transmission of advice from director to actors whilst explaining the interaction:

> Thursday 30th November: Bergman finds the actor doing the part of Bengtsson […] still a little too friendly towards Johansson, his younger colleague. His advice to the actor is characteristic: "Look at his forehead, don't let your eyes sink in to meet his glance".
>
> (Törnqvist, 1973, p.12)

Antony Sher's diaries have been a major contribution to insider accounts. *Year of the Fat Knight* (2015) details his playing of Falstaff for the Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC) and contains frustratingly tantalising sections for this research as it takes you to the footholds of the discovery mountain yet never climbs it. In his diary entry of 28 February 2014 he describes a choice between playing a line ironically or realistically. Justifying how the line could be played both ways, Sher states that 'I'm choosing this second way. A good find' (Sher, 2015, p.137), yet the explanation of the find ceases, with little detail of its efficacy. However, Sher's precursor text *Year of the King* (1985) unpicks discovery moments more explicitly. Detailing his rehearsals for playing the title role in *Richard III* for the RSC in 1984, Sher writes of initial insights during his readings, discovering that 'two encounters happen *to* [Richard]' (Sher, 1985, p.58). Chapters 3 and 4 of Sher's diary detail the main rehearsal period and he begins to contextualise his discoveries made, from an 'interesting discovery' (Sher, 1985, p.157) about Richard's relationship to Buckingham from a close reading of the text, as well as a 'rich discovery' (Sher, 1985, p.172) around his relationship with Margaret, to a second rich discovery about playing 'real issues' (Sher, 1985, p.212). Sher delves deeper into contextualising his discovery process and practitioners can glean more from this text with fewer inferences.

Information about breakthroughs can be found within production files housed in various archives. In particular, the Victoria and Albert Museum, London houses the archives of notable directors Peter Brook and Josie Rourke, as well as those of theatre companies including the Royal Court, Sphinx, Talawa, the Young Vic, Monstrous Regiment, Cheek by Jowl and Paines Plough, amongst others. Staffordshire University holds the Peter Cheeseman archives from his time at the New Victoria Theatre, Staffordshire where he pioneered the musical documentary form, and Leeds University Library holds the archives of director William Gaskill, who founded Joint Stock and was Artistic Director of the Royal Court. These production files, when examined, illustrate how some choices are made. Yet, the archival material is deposited following a production and does not follow a linear

timeline and the theatre historian has to infer context and meaning from a field of material. Most illuminating are the directorial notebooks and notes from rehearsals and performances. These notes articulate the breakthroughs a director may have made outside of the actual rehearsal, but do not allow for observations on the rehearsal room floor to be captured. Whilst prompt books[7] identify the key results of blocking[8] and production choices, they do not often reveal how these decisions were arrived at or what breakthroughs had occurred. Any possibilities arrived at are subjective and *a priori* in a hunt for a conclusion.

2.1.2 OUTSIDER ACCOUNTS

Analysing outsider accounts (mainly by observers) of rehearsals can be of certain use in uncovering rehearsal strategies used and potential breakthrough moments. Rossmanith (2009) states that early rehearsal observations from the 1970s based themselves in the field of psychology in an attempt to create an empirical framework. This was notably attempted by Robert Porter in 1975 who states that 'for a subject of such obsessive interest to those of the theatre, there has been no systematic study [of rehearsal interaction]' (Porter, 1975, p.4). Porter created *An Observational System of Rehearsal Interaction Categories* based in empirical research, leading to coding rehearsal interaction between actors and directors to create a matrix of systems. Porter coded the interaction taking place in a rehearsal; for example, if a director asked a question, this was labelled under category 4. However, this is a scientific methodology and the data presented numerically is obtuse. The quantitative nature of Porter's research means that it can only present an end result, moving this rehearsal studies researcher further away from ascertaining what was happening in the

[7] The Deputy Stage Manager (DSM) is responsible in the rehearsal room for the creation of the 'Prompt Book', which is a record of the positioning of actors ('blocking'; see footnote below), and marks all cue points that the DSM will 'call' for the production departments when the production is running.

[8] Blocking is the physical positioning of actors in relation to each other and their environment: 'a changing dynamic or significant interaction between or among human beings' (Cole, 1992, p.18).

rehearsal rooms he was observing. It therefore tells us 'when' a moment was happening in rehearsal, which can go some way to answer subsidiary research question 2 of this thesis, but little of the moment's impact on the final production.

David Selbourne's *The Making of 'A Midsummer Night's Dream'* is an early contemporary outsider diary account of the entire rehearsal period (not pre-rehearsal or of the production) of Peter Brook's 1970 seminal production. This is worth attention due to it being a landmark account published a decade following the production in 1982. Yet, Selbourne often succumbs to an obsession with Brook as director, rather than writing objectively about the interconnectivity of the director and his actors in the rehearsal space. Selbourne's work foregrounds Brook's approaches over all of the rehearsal room collaborators viewed, and indeed the subtitle of the text is perhaps more in keeping with the point of view of the observer, described as 'an eye witness account of Peter Brook's production from first rehearsal to first night' (Selbourne, 2010, p.iii). Selbourne confirms this God-like approach explicitly by asking us to consider whether 'there [is] another play in rehearsal here, in which Brook is not the director, but the chief actor?' (Selbourne, 2010, p.27). Unfortunately, Selbourne's voice overpowers at times, with little context: 'I did not attend the rehearsal, but remained in my own world of weariness and depression' (Selbourne, 1982, p.63); this does not shed light on the rehearsal and theatre-making process.

Finally, although an important account of rehearsal, little is referenced of Brook's pre-rehearsal decision making. This thesis positions the rehearsal room work in relation to that of both the pre-rehearsal directorial decisions, and the final production. Whilst this study therefore spans pre-rehearsal through to the finished production, it is important to note that the majority of accounts concentrate on the rehearsal period itself. Yet the complete thread of pre-rehearsal to production is vital to ensure a comprehensive narrative line, and assess the impact of pre-rehearsal decisions on the

rehearsal period, which then informs the final production and its *mise-en-scène.*

McAuley's 2012 text *Not Magic But Work* details an ethnographic account of director Neil Armfield's 2007 production of *Toy Symphony* by Michael Gow, produced by Company B, Sydney, Australia, and her text explicitly uses an ethnographic qualitative methodological approach. Kate Rossmanith's unpublished 2003 thesis builds from McAuley's early work through an ethnographic study of Kevin Elyot's *My Night With Reg* in 1998 at the Newtown Theatre, Sydney.

Journalist Jonathan Croall's *The National Theatre at Work* series (2001) includes several useful observational accounts of rehearsals at the National of, amongst others, Mark Ravenhill's *Mother Clap's Molly House* (2001) and *Hamlet* (2000). Written for a wider target audience, these do little by way of delving into the nuances of breakthrough moments and remain journalistic in tone. Croall's shortcoming is that his frequently obsequious tones obscure a lack of empirical evidence, and his collection of insights into rehearsal rooms detailed in his text *Closely Observed Theatre* (2014) do not rely on criticality. It is disappointing that his closeness to numerous rehearsal periods encountered over many years does not offer deeper analysis.

Jim Hiley's 1981 account of rehearsal of Bertolt Brecht's *Galileo* at the National Theatre in 1980 is a journalistic outsider's view which concentrates on director John Dexter's rehearsal journey. Like Selbourne, Hiley creates an almost obsessive description of a guru director in action, constructing Dexter as a parental (and at times almost despotic) figure. As with other accounts, there is a reference to an 'aha' moment, yet with little context to support the reason why: 'Dexter was in the bath when a way of making the play work in the Olivier [theatre] came to him' (Hiley, 1981, p.14). It is not made clear how the author knew this, or what the specificity of this pre-rehearsal breakthrough was.

Not all outsider accounts are journalistic in tone however. Academic Maria Shevtsova (2007) concentrates on a director's finished production, as opposed to rehearsal analysis. Whilst these are lucid accounts of the finished productions of directors such as Dodin and Robert Wilson, there is no study of their rehearsal processes and how this period may correlate to their final productions. Shevtsova's studies add to theoretical production analysis as opposed to rehearsal studies. Other more academic outsider accounts include the eclectic observations in Jen Harvie and Andy Lavender's *Making Contemporary Theatre: International Rehearsal Rooms*. This text serves up short chapters from rehearsal observers of directors and companies working within the post-dramatic paradigm and their processes of 'making theatre [with a] focus on devising' (Harvie and Lavender, 2010, p.2) and does not examine text-based theatre which could support this thesis's enquiry.

2.1.3 OUTSIDER-OUTSIDER ACCOUNTS

A posited third category of 'outsider-outsider accounts' describes rehearsal narratives when a journalist or researcher does not even enter into the rehearsal room, but interviews practitioners about their practices, or uses secondary source material. On the whole, these continue to privilege the directorial voice and do not focus often on breakthrough moments. Although these may be written by academics and are less journalistic in their approach, they take us further away from an actual rehearsal room.

Helen Manfull's 1996 text *Taking Stage* is a collection of interviews with prominent female directors and contains a chapter on rehearsal room practice. The directors were not observed by Manfull and described their techniques through interviews. Sue Sutton-Mayo revealed to Manfull that one breakthrough came following her running out of ideas and the actors stepping in collectively: 'And everyone said, "That's it; that's brilliant!"' (Sutton-Mayo, in Manfull, 1999, p.101) but again, little detail is presented as to what that breakthrough was and its impact on the production process

longitudinally. Interviews with directors continue in texts such as *Contemporary European Theatre Directors* (2010), yet the reader is left to infer how a director's rehearsal room operates. From *Cheek by Jowl's* director Declan Donnellan's 'voyage of discovery' (Delgado and Rebellato, 2010, p.156) and the description of Christoph Marthaler's 'relaxed nature' (Delgado and Rebellato, 2010, p.190), readers construct their own meaning. Duska Radosavljevic's interviews in *The Contemporary Ensemble* (2013) aim to demystify a range of rehearsal methods in relation to ensemble companies from Michael Boyd and his RSC ensemble processes of 2002 to 2012, through to those of LeCompte and her New York company *The Wooster Group*. This range of interviews gives us a glimpse into the director or ensemble leader's rehearsal rooms yet falls short of concentrating on the microcosm of a single rehearsal period or discussing the impact on breakthroughs directly.

Wendy Lesser's text *A Director Calls* (1997) examines the work of Stephen Daldry, capitalising through its title on the director's iconoclastic production of J.B. Priestley's *An Inspector Calls* for the National Theatre (1993). As an outsider-outsider, studying the play and the production, coupled with interviews, Lesser makes *a priori* links to how Daldry and his designer Ian MacNeil create the visual landscape of the production, whereby she links Priestley's stage direction of 'dispens[ing] with an ordinary realistic set, if only because the dining table becomes a nuisance' (Lesser, 1997, p.1) to how,

> Daldry and MacNeil unlock the whole play. For by placing the Birlings and their dinner guest inside the comfy house on stilts […] Daldry has freed the play to generate all the various meanings it is capable of conveying.
>
> (Lesser, 1997, p.19)

It is questionable whether a director can ever free a play to generate or cover *all* meanings a play can possibly generate; Lesser's salient point,

though stands: when concepts and discoveries are made, these are not always in the rehearsal room, but often in pre-production. This supports this thesis's examination of *Close Quarter's* pre-rehearsal decisions.

Other work includes that of John Bull and Graham Saunders, who have also contributed to knowledge in their 2015 three volume series *British Theatre Companies: From Fringe to Mainstream.* Several of the chapters explicitly discuss rehearsal room structures, relating them to their company structures and how this sits within wider political arts and cultural policies and movements. Accounts from the archives of the National Theatre, with selected letters and correspondence, are helpfully packaged together in Daniel Rosenthal's 2018 compilation *Dramatic Exchanges.* There are many metaphorical nuggets of gold for theatre enthusiasts such as Maggie Smith's front-footed, no-holds-barred, acerbic letter to Sir Laurence Olivier, the then-director of the National Theatre who, in 1969, overlooked the future Dame for Millamant in Congreve's *The Way of the World*; unfortunately the compilation yields little data in relation to inside the rehearsal room.

The outsider-outsider account therefore takes us even further away from the rehearsal room. Whilst all three categories (including the insider and outsider accounts) contribute towards aiding our understanding of rehearsal studies, this thesis argues that the most meaningful way to understand rehearsals is to study them from within, particularly in relation to breakthroughs.

2.2 THE 'AHA' MOMENT

'Aha' moments (sometimes under their interchangeable terms of 'eureka', 'breakthrough' or 'inspiration') have been subject to scientific enquiry; this subchapter identifies major studies from 1961. It is towards answering the first subsidiary question that this subchapter can contribute, 'what counts as breakthrough?'. Scientists draw different (and sometimes contradictory) conclusions about these moments, and identify different

qualities in what constitutes an 'aha' moment and how it comes about. For example, Mark Beeman and John Kounios state that 'aha' moments are not sudden moments of insight, but come about through training enquiry and logical processing as a 'methodical hypothesis-testing approach' (Beeman and Kounios, 2009, p.211). Whilst Kevin Ashton defines the 'aha' moment in terms of an earth-shattering, seismic event, as a 'sudden revelation […] apocryphal and unable to survive scrutiny' (Ashton, 2015, p.42), evidently, scientists do not agree and do, indeed, scrutinise these moments, supporting this thesis, which concerns itself with the artistic, and not the apocryphal.

1961 saw William J.J. Gordon's notion of Synectics introduced to the field, defining an 'aha' moment as a 'bringing together [of] things previously unconnected' (Rickards, 1999, p.39) through the 'joining together of […] irrelevant elements' (Gordon, 1961, p.3). Rejecting the notion that creative breakthrough moments occur mysteriously (which Ashton claims over fifty years later), Gordon posits that creative responses are as a result of a balance of 'problem stating [and] problem solving' (Gordon, 1961, p.33) where a problem must be stated prior to solving it. Through the *Close Quarters* rehearsal observations, actors did state their problems, which then led to a breakthrough moment as discussed in 6.1.6. The notion of problem solving sits at the heart of a breakthrough, and that actors and directors are problem solvers in that 'concrete and effective processes […] enable[s] them to realise their ideas' (Simonsen, 2017, p.5) by making breakthroughs throughout the rehearsal period.

Gordon (1961) also states that there is a need to make the familiar strange and the strange familiar in order to see the problem through a different lens. In Synectics, prior to a breakthrough being made, there is 'an observational change in the psychological state of individuals directly involved' (Rickards, 1999, p.33), whereby a hot state in the body replaces a literal, cool and logical approach to the work, also observed through the ethnographic study. In 1979, Pamela Auble, Jeffrey Franks and Salvatore Soraci undertook several laboratory experiments in relation to how an

individual can recall an obscure sentence by being given a cue word. Although their initial findings meant that 'further research [was] necessary to determine the relative adequacy […] of the 'aha' effect' (Auble, Franks and Soraci, 1979, p.434), they proved that an initial non-comprehension of an obscure sentence presented to a participant that was followed by an 'aha' moment ensured a sustained future recall experience. For example, the obscure sentence, 'the food was intact because the plate fell apart', when given to a participant, was initially confusing and difficult to recall. However, then giving the participant the contextual cue word, 'dentures', allowed for the participant to understand and recall the sentence. Secondly, longer time periods for processing ideas (sometimes called 'incubation periods') ensured that a 'greater degree of […] elaboration' (Auble, Franks, and Soraci, 1979, p.426) followed from the participants of the study. The cue word, coupled with an 'aha' moment, made the sentence memorable. The observations of *Close Quarters* often saw small moments of recognition occur following a directorial cue as described in the later chapters.

Tudor Rickards in the late 1990s articulates his definition of an 'aha' moment in relation to creativity. Whilst his target audience are MBA business students, there are several key areas that can be applied to the arts. Rickards details Arthur Koestler's 'nothing new [approach] which regards discovery processes as producing no totally new concept […] all so called discoveries are modifications of […] existing knowledge' (Rickards, 1999, p.28). Through rehearsals, as observed in this study, actors and directors are building on their existing knowledge of theatre-making or earlier research into the play and a new insight is seen through the 'application of existing knowledge' (Rickards, 1999, p.28). Bowden *et al.* (2005) concluded that 'aha' moments occur when 'solvers engage distinct neural and cognitive processes that allow them to see connections that previously eluded them' (2005: p.326). Their research sets 'aha' moments in the context of using conscious, pragmatic task-related methods to overcome problems in line with Gordon and Rickards's conclusions. Connection making and building of ideas is a common theme through the literature and one which supported

the definition of Lens One, a small moment of recognition building on existing knowledge.

In relation to neuroscience, Jiang Qui *et al.* (2009) concentrate on revealing which parts of the brain are activated during a study of students solving Chinese riddles. Their conclusions go some way to highlighting what is happening in the brain during an 'aha' moment. Three areas of the brain are activated. Firstly, the precuneus, involved with previously-experienced events relating to the current task and retrieval of information. Secondly, the left inferior/middle frontal cortex, which is an area of the brain linked to metaphorical meanings, quick responses and forming new and 'novel associations' (Li *et al.*, 2009, p.400). Finally, the inferior cocipital gyrus and cerebellum, linked to visual imagery, error correction, and ability to pay attention to a task. Although the authors of the study highlight the limitations of not being able to pinpoint exactly the 'aha' moment through brain Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) scans, it does link to the processing and snowballing effect of piecing together previous tasks in relation to the current one, whilst giving attention to a specific task. Antonia Hamilton of the University College London's Institute of Cognitive Neuroscience is currently undertaking research using technology to track brain impulses during rehearsal and performance[9], responding to David Jackson's proposition that,

> what is happening to an actor physiologically and neurologically when they are in a creative state is a question that could only be addressed by a collaborative project between theatre practitioners and scientists.
>
> (Jackson, 2013, p.251)

The results of Hamilton's research have yet to be published (as of November 2019).

[9] Details of this are available at https://www.thestage.co.uk/opinion/2019/antonia-hamilton-were-going-to-wire-up-actors-brains-and-find-out-whats-going-on/

Leigh Longhurst (2010) believes the 'aha' moment comes from the 'private, interior world' (Longhurst, 2010, p.12) of an individual and that it must be captured through the participant communicating this in some way. Through her work examining life coaches and their clients, Longhurst concluded that participants paused before the 'aha' moment. This pause she terms an 'impasse' (Longhurst, 2010, p.30), followed by a positive mood, linking to Gordon's (1961) work above. Donald A. Schon states the need to take a moment to pause in the action to think and plan the next moment, thus allowing the actors to 'create opportunities for reflection-in-action' (Schon, 1982, p.279) whereby reflection occurs during the process of creation, as opposed to following its event. The impasse for Longhurst often came when the client wasn't consciously focussing on actually making a breakthrough (or indeed happened outside of the practice when not with the coach). Threading through Longhurst's study is the presence of the life coach in the importance of creating as a catalyst for breakthrough environments. In theatre terms, the parallel for the coach is the director, who 'ask[s] powerful questions' (Longhurst, 2010, p.119). For Longhurst, the coach (director) first recognises and then works to remove the client (actor's) obstacles to solving their own problem. As a director, I personally 'coach' actors by asking questions in order for them to take ownership and arrive at their own discoveries. This links to Longhurst's idea that 'insights appear to be effected through the use of powerful questioning and the encouragement clients receive to become familiar with their gremlins' (Longhurst, 2010, p.123). A question may also be asked by the coach in the session which often led clients to an 'aha' moment following their session in the privacy of their home, and one of Wasserberg's tools as a director was to ask questions of her actors.

Mitter, in his study of Brook's methodologies, relates asking actors questions to enabling a breakthrough and suggests a lack of answers is an 'ignorance' (Mitter, 1992, p.11) on the actor's part for not knowing, thus infantilising the actor's role whereby 'the all-knowing director and the infantilised actor [paradigm] leaves no room for the more nuanced

interpretations of director/actor exchanges' (Rossmanith, 2000, p.35). This is built upon by Crawford fifteen years later, who lambasts the fact that actors are not part of the 'creative team' in current theatre terminology and thus infantilised by 'industry processes' (Crawford, 2015, p.230). Again, the 'aha' moments must therefore align with pre-decided artistic visions to be meaningful.

The scientific literature underpins the importance of observing physiological changes in the body prior to, during and following the breakthrough. Writing at a similar time to Longhurst, Topolinski and Reber's argument that 'aha' moments are linked to fluency is important in what to observe. Fluency is the

> ease to which information is processed [and that] insight is an experience during or subsequent to problem solving attempts, in which problem related content comes to mind with sudden ease and provides a feeling of pleasure, the belief that the solution is true and confidence in this belief.
>
> (Topolinski and Reber, 2010, p.403)

At this moment of insight a concept or information that has been difficult to process can, after the 'aha' moment, be processed more fluently. The *Close Quarters* example that opened this thesis identified the fluency and confidence that actor Dylan Wood explained, following his breakthrough. From this, Topolinski and Reber state, we have 'subjective confidence in this truth judgment' (Topolinski and Reber, 2010, p.404), and Wood was observed to have a confidence when he replayed the scene.

This has profound implications for the rehearsal room, in my belief, as the actor or director may find a sudden confidence following this moment of insight, yet if this moment is not congruent with the overarching frame of the production then a false confidence may ensue, potentially leading the actor down a path of diminishing returns. This has been highlighted by Mitchell as she aims to 'limit discoveries or discovery

junkeyism, otherwise it's the act of feeling pleasure but not constructing anything deeply' (Mitchell, 2015, 1965); breakthroughs need to be framed and have boundaries.

2.2.1 POSITIVE FEELINGS

In 2011, Chris Fields's research highlighted from a neuroscientific perspective that the 'intense pleasure of 'aha!' is associated not with the often-extended process of grappling with a problem, but rather with the recognition of a solution' (Fields, 2011, p.1162). Examining non-verbal clues in a rehearsal environment is as important therefore as verbal clues, and as outward expressions of internal satisfaction or pleasure. This is echoed in the 'immediate positive effect [that] can be measured by assessing the activity of the zygomaticus major – the smiling muscle' (Topolinski and Reber, 2010, p.404) and in 'the rush of well-being, of satisfaction' (Csíkszentmihályi, 2013, p.123) following a breakthrough. Fields also posits that this pleasure 'associated with discovery […] is regarded as an intrinsic motivation towards learning' (Fields, 2011, p.1161). These smaller 'aha' moments are not ends in themselves, but create a stepping stone for motivation in the individual for further insights, to make future discoveries. In a similar context, the actor must take the moment of insight offered by the 'aha' moment and then introduce this into a scene and further rehearsals.

2.2.2 MAGIC OR WORK?

Written for a non-academic audience, Kevin Ashton's *How to Fly a Horse* (2015) debunks the myth that creativity is an elusive activity that only a select few can attain as 'creating is not magic, but work' (Ashton, 2015, p.xviii), paraphrasing Brecht's statement which is also used by McAuley as the title of her ethnographic account of rehearsals, *Not Magic But Work* (2012). The actress playing Helena in Peter Brook's 1970 production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* testified to this when Brook suggested a run

through of Act Three, Scene Two was a 'most magical moment' (Selbourne, 2010, p.99); she revealed to Brook that she was

> taken aback, but easily resisting the emotional pressure […] she says firmly: "I don't admit it to anyone, when I know something magical has happened. It would destroy it".
>
> (Selbourne, 2010, p.99)

This 'magic', for the actor, becomes a holy grail of discovery: an earth-shattering 'aha' moment which must not be articulated for fear it may disappear, echoing the neurosis experienced by some actors articulated in Chapter 1.

Returning to Ashton's definition of the 'aha' moment as a seismic event, a 'sudden revelation […] apocryphal and unable to survive scrutiny' (Ashton, 2015, p.42) is refuted by this thesis, which repositions breakthroughs not as 'junkeyism', but as naturally occurring moments in the rehearsal process. Ashton's argument that creativity and discovery can only come about via 'ordinary thinking' (Ashton, 2015, p.37) over a period of time and that hard work creates an 'aha' moment *is* supported by this thesis.

2.2.3 INCUBATION PERIODS

Ashton's contemporary William Irvine (2015) argues that the 'aha' moment cannot be consciously summoned and often arrives in 'intervals of rest' (Irvine, 2015, p.10), arguing that the subconscious mind works on problems via processing in-between conscious sessions, which happened to the clients in Longhurst's 2010 study. Irvine's four stages that lead to a breakthrough moment (Irvine, 2015, p.216) whereby conscious preparation leads to an unconscious incubation, suggests that the problem rests in the unconscious. The third stage is the 'aha' moment: a moment of illumination and insight that, in the final stage, should be verified by checking the 'aha' moment against a series of relevant benchmarks as required by the field.

Irvine is, however, drawing on Graham Wallas's 'Four Stages of Creative Thinking: preparation, incubation, illumination and verification' (Rickards, 1999, p.28) but does not reference Wallas.

Csíkszentmihályi posits five stages of creativity, following interviews of ninety-one 'exceptional individuals' (Csíkszentmihályi, 2013, p.12) who made an impact on their domain. These five stages (Csíkszentmihályi, 2013: 79) echo Wallas's, yet have a differing process following the 'aha' moment (remembering that Wallas describes this as the moment of 'illumination'): these being preparation, incubation, insight, evaluation and elaboration. The key differences are that whereas Wallas and Irvine believe that the final stage relates to verification from an outside source (in theatre's domain, the director), for Csíkszentmihályi it relates to evaluating the 'aha' moment first as something worth pursuing (which may also include verification) and then finally a period of elaboration, where the idea is developed. One should not be too literal with these phases; they 'overlap and reoccur several times before the process is completed' (Csíkszentmihályi, 2013, p.83); there may indeed be a 'thunderous "aha" made up from a chorus of little "Eureka's"' (Csíkszentmihályi, 2013, p.83). This chorus of 'little Eureka's' forms the basis of Lens One: Individual Moments of Recognition.

2.2.4 REHEARSAL ROOM BREAKTHROUGHS

Creative breakthrough moments 'grow out of separate flashes and moments' (Stanislavski, 2008, p.104) where there is a snowballing of smaller moments towards a major 'aha' moment. Stanislavski also identified the importance of both the small insights and large breakthroughs, whilst not using these terms directly. Arts Council England Chief Executive Darren Henley states that the creative process involves 'constant repetition with incremental minute improvements' (Henley, 2016, p.23). The minute improvement concept is useful, as the search for a 'eureka moment' can be self-defeating. It suggests that without a breakthrough nothing useful

occurs, yet the field notes of the *Close Quarters* observation suggest that whilst breakthroughs were not countless (Figure 17), progress was always being made between breakthroughs. For Susan Melrose, this is what is deemed 'expert-practitioner intuitions […] linking to the setups and contexts to which they apply' (Melrose, 2006, p.76).

'Creators remodel what they inherit' (Brandt and Eagleman, 2017, p.45), and a so-called 'lightning moment' has been seen as a fallacy:

> Many people have figuratively stood in thunderstorms, waiting for the lightning to strike, but creative ideas evolve from existing memories and impressions […] They arise from the interweaving of billions of microscopic sparks in the vast darkness of the brain.
>
> (Brandt and Eagleman, 2017, p.46)

So, we are therefore building and layering, and are either 'bending, breaking [or] blending' (Brandt and Eagleman, 2017, p.49). When we 'bend', we take something already in existence and modify it; as a director, I transposed the Restoration world of William Wycherley's *The Country Wife* (1675) to that of contemporary London city life (Staffordshire University 2018). When 'breaking', we take something apart and reassemble differently, and when 'blending', two different things are pieced together. 'Blending', as a concept through this research in relation to rehearsal room practice, is a reoccurring theme. This links again to Henley's notion that without creativity 'nothing new would happen (Henley, 2018, p.ix) and that we are often building on previous ideas and blending thoughts.

The review of the literature on 'aha' moments moves us closer to defining what a breakthrough actually is from a scientific and neuroscientific point of view, coupled with awareness that participants may have. Yet, this could limit our possibilities within a creative paradigm, as much of this is at micro-biological level. An answer to the subsidiary question 'what counts as a breakthrough?' in rehearsals could not be answered through a literature review alone and only *a priori* deductions could be ascertained. An

ethnographic study brings in certain scientific propositions as a way to define breakthroughs and add nuance to the argument. The next subchapter discusses 'flow', and how this may link to both the creative state that Stanislavski wished to achieve, and if this is conducive for 'aha' moments to occur in rehearsals.

2.3 FLOW, 'AHA' MOMENTS, AND THE CREATIVE STATE

Csíkszentmihályi (1997, 2013) describes how human experiences flow when they have a clear goal to achieve and the challenge is consistently married with the skill base of the individual undertaking it. Simultaneously, there is absorption in the task in the present here and now, with immediate feedback, no fear of failure, a distortion of time, and a lack of self-consciousness, and attention is focused in an autotelic (self-motivating) manner, with much personal enjoyment or happiness sensed by the individual following the event. This is where one is 'flooded with gratitude' (Csíkszentmihályi, 1997, p.32). Relating this to Stanislavski's sense of being in a creative state (the 'being in the moment' of the here and now) as well as the sense of enjoyment following flow, links to the joy sensations experienced following an 'aha' moment as discussed above throughout 2.1.2.

The psychology of flow in relation to a theatre rehearsal process is embryonic. In 2006, Kate Hefferon and Stewart Ollis in relation to dancers rehearsing undertook one of the few pieces of research linking flow to rehearsals, whereby flow creates opportunities for 'insights and revelations' (Maslow, in Hefferon and Ollis, 2006, p.142) which, for these purposes, can be termed an 'aha' moment. Their study suggests that the dancers need rewards in terms of feedback and positive criticism, echoing Mitchell who believes that actors in theatre need 'positive feedback' (Mitchell, 2009, p.129), and recalling Wasserberg's need to 'love' her actors, and that she would 'only praise and tell them what they are doing right, if I really had to choose' (Wasserberg, 2019, l.194).

Theatre director and academic Marc Silberschatz (2013) refers to the paucity of links between acting and flow, yet recognises its significance. Actors were the subject of Keir Cutler and Jeffrey J. Martin's research, which concluded that actors only experience flow four times per year. However, this is an early research study into flow and creativity whereby the writers identified that more research is needed to ascertain this claim's validity, as they concluded their study with the suggestion that 'scientists […] should first replicate the current exploratory findings with a larger and more diverse sample' (Cutler and Martin, 2002, p.352). If the discoveries are confirmed in further research, flow could form an essential concept in creating an ideal environment for breakthroughs, where skill levels are high and challenges are matched to the needs of the individual. Cutler and Martin's study goes on to suggest that if these findings are correlated by future studies (and as of 2019 there have been none forthcoming), then there could be profound implications for directors when constructing a rehearsal period to ensure optimum flow/creative states. For example, casting should consider the skills of the actor in relation to the challenge of the role (as Wasserberg identifies for *Close Quarters* in Chapter 4), and rehearsal room practice must increase in challenge, in order that an actor's skills are matched with the challenge from the director and fellow actors (identified in Chapters 5 and 6). In the latter part of the rehearsal period where work is repeated through run-throughs, and where form is shaped and earlier discoveries consolidated, directors could consider how to increase challenges for their actors. Playwright and director George Bernard Shaw called for a stop to repetition: 'a director who says "we must go over and over this again until we get it right" is not directing: he is schoolmastering […] repetitions on the spot do not improve, they deteriorate every time' (Shaw, 1949, in West, 1958, p.283). Rehearsals must therefore increase in challenges as the actors' skill develops within the frames of the production, otherwise, according to Csíkszentmihályi, boredom will occur with a low challenge.

2.3.1 BEING 'IN THE MOMENT': FLOW AND MOTIVATION

Flow is also related to the intrinsic motivation of the actor to achieve a result in the rehearsal room. Cutler and Martin discovered that the motivations of actors when achieving flow are indeed intrinsic and not extrinsic. This is supported by Teresa Amabile's research at Harvard Business School as she believes that 'intrinsic motivation […] still applies as conducive to creativity' (cited in Rickards, 1999, p.33), which could reduce the need to gain positive feedback from the director in terms of the motivation of the actor to 'please' within rehearsals. Csíkszentmihályi posits that people feel best when what they do is voluntary, which also suggests that directors should allow actors to take ownership in the discovery making process, as with little intrinsic motivation 'entropy' (Csíkszentmihályi, 1997, p.28) can occur. Intrinsic motivation therefore relates to a personal need to satisfy themselves as actors, that they need to marry their process to the text, or a personal sense of creation as opposed to blithely following a directorial vision. Fields's notion of the 'aha' relates to a personal pleasure felt from discovery, which he links to triggering intrinsic motivation:

> The pleasure associated with discovery and understanding is regarded as an intrinsic motivation towards learning, not only in academic environment[s] (Gottfried, 1985) but also in curiosity-driven unstructured play.
>
> (Fields, 2011, p.1161)

Irvine constantly returns to the fact that trial and error plays a significant part in the lead up to an 'aha' moment, relating this to play and vulnerability. However, whilst Irvine signifies the importance of flow in the capacity to create an 'aha' moment in art, this is not expanded on in any detail and with only a passing reference to flow in relation to scientific discoveries:

> During a flow experience, a person lives, as Zen Buddhists put it, "in the moment". He might become so involved in what he is doing that

> he becomes indifferent to what other people think of his activities. The rest of the world falls away. […] among those who experience flow are athletes, artists, religious mystics, and scientists.
>
> (Irvine, 2015, p.149)

Through *Close Quarters* observation, directorial notes form part of an increased set of challenges for the actors. In order to fully embrace challenges, though, Stanislavski wishes for his actors to enter into a 'creative state' (Stanislavski, 2010, p.293) where actors 'truly enter *sacred* [physical and psychological] space to do this work' (McNiff, 2004, p.30), during which an actor's 'inner and outer creative state brings him to the state of *I Am Being*, when a character is present and lives in the moment' (Van Den Bosch 2013, p.6). This is the ideal of what should be achieved in order to support creativity and freedom in a rehearsal room, and where moments of inspiration when an actor 'knows instinctively what to do as the character' (Bennett and French, 2016, p.3) can take place.

Breakthroughs are related to the feeling of 'exhilaration that often accompanies flow' (Silberschatz, 2013, p.17); this relates to Stanislavski's notion of frustration when breakthroughs are not made due to a lack of a creative state:

> The rehearsal journey is one where challenges continually increase in sympathy with actors' skills. This approach […] led to a significantly flow-conducive process.
>
> (Silberschatz, 2013, p.20)

The work of ensemble building has been documented recently by several practitioners including Bonczek and Storck (2012) and Britton (2013); this relates to the creative mindset of the rehearsal room and how this may support 'aha' moments to come about. Britton proposes, like Stanislavski, that a creative state must be induced in a company prior to the main work of the rehearsal can start whereby the 'precise and subtle use of the senses is essential' (Britton, 2013, p.344). This again reinforces the idea that the

'actor's inner creative state' (Stanislavski, 2010, p.293) must be found as a conducive atmosphere for 'aha' moments to occur.

Hefferon and Ollis (2006) confirm that some of the factors influencing flow in a creative environment for dancers include the performer's confidence, a connection to and with their stimulus (in a dancer's case, music), a familiarity with their performance space and stage, their relationship with the choreographer and artistic directors, the positive mental attitudes of their fellow performers and directors, a pre-performance ritual (e.g. a warm-up) as well as costumes and make up, as a stepping into role. It is clear to see these links with an actor's rehearsal process and how a strong and safe actor-director relationship, which does not impede on play and risk taking, as well as identifying the potential blocks to flow which include eliminating harsh external judgements, can lead to a positive creative state.

For Jerri Daboo, Rebecca Loukes and Phillip B. Zarrilli (2013), the creative state relates to the feelings generated within breakthrough moments as identified by the scientific studies in 2.2 above. Referencing *An Actor's Work* (2010), they describe the state following the creation of a merging actor and character as a 'third Being […] as easy, effortless and pleasurable' (Daboo, Loukes and Zarrilli, 2013, p.165). This feeling of pleasure builds on from Gordon's study, where participants articulated a 'warm feeling of being right' (Gordon, 1961, p.136) during a breakthrough.

2.4 BREAKTHROUGHS IN REHEARSALS

This subchapter presents how the literature defines breakthroughs in rehearsals, how these may come about and how they are bounded by directorial concepts, by moving into the fields of theatre and rehearsal studies. This links to subsidiary research questions two and three: when might discoveries occur in a rehearsal process and how, why and for whom might it be ascertained this breakthrough is meaningful?

How actors articulate a moment of breakthrough and why, also forms part of this subchapter, alongside examining dual consciousness as a vehicle by which actors can understand how they are both able to be in role as another character, whilst simultaneously describing and articulating their breakthroughs and progress. This links to subsidiary research question four: what levels of awareness of discovery moments might participants have, both during the rehearsal process and upon reflection? From the literature it is important to begin to identify what actors and directors may mean by a breakthrough, building upon the scientific points of view discussed in the first part of the review.

2.4.1 THE ROLE OF THE DIRECTOR AND THEIR INTERACTION WITH ACTORS

The director is a major figure of contemporary text-based theatre-making and,

> whether we like it or not there is almost always a hierarchy between director and actor at work in the rehearsal room and the very significance of this hierarchy is enough to have a significant impact on the creative flow of the rehearsal process.
>
> (Christie, 2015, p.158)

Directors at the top of this hierarchical creative food chain shape the form, concept and rules of the production, often before the casting has begun. In an extreme case, Mitchell ensures that

> most of the discovery process [sits] outside rehearsal. That is just director-led solitary preparation. 60-70% of [moments] can be analysed before a rehearsal begins.
>
> (2015, l.18)

Many writers have charted the history of the directorial role including Edward Braun (1982), who gives a detailed overview of directors subsequent

to the rise of the modern form of director in the 19th Century, as well as numerous introductory chapters in more 'how-to' style texts by Don Taylor (1996), Harold Clurman (1997), and Rob Swain (2011). The director's presence is a formidable one in rehearsal studies literature, as it is the

> […] director [who is the] lynchpin of the whole enterprise. In a good rehearsal process it is the director who stimulates, facilitates and elicits the creativity of a large number of different artists and then somehow draws all these inputs together and shapes them into a coherent work of art.
>
> (McAuley, 2012, p.230)

This subchapter therefore concentrates on interactions between directors and actors and their impact on decision-making and the usefulness of any rehearsal breakthroughs. Again, there is little in the way of specific texts about this interaction, and so the literature review draws on extant references, no matter how small. 'How-to' texts discuss the importance of the director as the relationship to the actor is 'one of the most influential and personal you can have' (Merlin, 2010, p.94), supporting the methodology of this study being ethnographic as opposed to auto-ethnographic. Merlin's text, like others that concentrate on the acting process such as Hagen (1973), offers suggestions of how one can bring one's process to rehearsals, but does not discuss in detail the complex inter-relationship with the director which this thesis does.

Interactions between the actors and the director is how 'rehearsal attains (and does not attain) its goals' (Baker-White, 1999, p.26). These goals are the creation of the theatre piece and for Brook, who outlines an ideal rehearsal situation in *The Empty Space,* the relationship framework for rehearsals 'is actor/subject/director' (Brook, 2008, p.113) with the subject being the text, and that the relationship 'is a dialogue and a dance between director and player' (Brook, 2008, p.138). Susan Cole, articulating the pessimistic view that 'sometimes […] mutual dependency of actor/director is

mutually non-existent' (Cole, 1992, p.219) is, from personal experience, justified. Although there are, and will inevitably continue to be, rehearsal rooms where this is the case, this section examines literature where there is evidence that dialogue between actor and director is essential to the act of theatre-making, to confirm what is working and what is not.

Charles Marowitz argues that when practitioners have a breakthrough, that its 'arrival should be thought of as the springboard for a new departure' (Marowitz, 1998, p.8), thus not making an 'aha' moment the end point, but allowing the curiosity of the company to search for further meanings to springboard to successive and potentially richer 'aha' moments. For psychologist Carol Dweck, this relates to having a conscious growth mindset and any 'achievement comes through commitment and effort' (Dweck, 2012, p.179). This echoes Stanislavski, for whom breakthroughs are continual, like waves lapping against the shore, but also for Longhurst (2010) above, where an initial realisation, not a major 'eureka' moment, can be a starting point for deeper discoveries through the snowballing of ideas.

Ownership of discoveries within the acting process has also come from a paradigm shift in British theatre from a 'director's theatre' towards actors' agency of their process, as theatre-making has moved towards an ensemble nature, with 'a single body [comprising of] interdependent differences' (Britton, 2013, p.13). These differences do inter-relate however, with an actor often needing the directorial outside eye, which can confirm whether the group (or individual) is still 'breathing as one' (Shevtsova, in Britton, 2013, p.11) within the 'rules' of the production. This seismic shift has its origins during Stanislavski's later period of Active Analysis, developed from 1916 onwards, and the creation of this new process during his last years of working life from 1935 to 1938. Active Analysis is where actors may have 'discoveries of a profound kind' (Christie, 2015, p.158) through etudes, improvising scenes and examining key events, all on an actor's feet as opposed to the round-table[10] mental reconnaissance activity of Stanislavski's

[10] Literally sitting 'around a table' and analysing the play.

early process. Even if directors do not use Active Analysis explicitly, then its philosophy has certainly infiltrated rehearsal rooms, as actors often now have equal 'creative agency' (McAuley, 2012, p.4) in Britain. This is not always the case in certain continental auteur European theatre practices, as Walter Meierjohann, the German-born Artistic Director of Home in Manchester, testifies:

> The main difference is that the role of the director in Germany is much more the role of the *auteur.* The actors look at you and expect you to do something radical with the text […] young directors in Germany don't care who's written it – they just want to do something with it.
>
> (Meierjohann, in Swain, 2011, p.27)

Marowitz (1998) developed his directorial process into one where he would be guided by the impulses of actors in the rehearsal room, instead of imposing pre-conceived ideas as an *auteur* director. When asked in my interview with Mitchell to unpack her comment that rehearsals are not about 'the search for a sudden revelatory discovery or epiphany that will unlock everything' (2009, p.115), she stated:

> MITCHELL: I'd like as many of them to be accepted and practiced, as delivering events [detailed in 2.6 below] is very hard and needs practicing. I like them all nailed as quickly as possible. I've prepared all of them, and 70% of them will be accepted by the acting group, and 30% are changed and then we have to work out how to do it. The execution is then in the effort of trying to make it brilliant; practicing that, as opposed to re-enquiring whether it's the right one or not, as that seems to be a real waste of time. I want to limit discovery so we practice what is discovered.

So, the more you keep discovery going, the less chance the actor actually has to practice what's discovered. Discovery is quite a dangerous addiction as it leads to thin outcomes.

MARSDEN: As opposed to "doing a lot of stuff" in the rehearsal room, it limits your time?

MITCHELL: Yes, when do you practice what you've discovered? And limiting any rehearsal room discoveries to the early stages allows you to spend the rest of rehearsals on the practice and execution of the discovered object or idea.

(Mitchell, 2015, l.39-54)

2.4.2 DIRECTORS GUIDING THE ACTORS: QUESTIONS AND ATMOSPHERES

There has to be a set of benchmarks that guide actors and directors towards the 'right' answers and verify a breakthrough moment. Marowitz wishes for directors and actors to move away from the concept that the rehearsal period is merely a child's treasure hunt 'unearthing only what had already been planted in order to be discovered' (Marowitz, 1998, p.5), by asking the question 'what [is] one looking for?' (Marowtiz, 1998, p.5) at the heart of rehearsals. This allowed Marowitz's actors to search within a bounded and definite frame. Whilst not using the term 'embodied' in 1998, Marowitz says that following a period of researching the play for potential discoveries, an actor could experience information (via active rehearsals such as improvisations and exercises), more rapidly within an ensemble company, where short cuts are made between actors and directors:

> Many of the problems thrown up by the work in the theatre would either be solved or considerably reduced if the same director worked

> with the same actors over an extended period of time. After a while, a group intelligence is engendered which becomes greater than the directors' and the actors' intelligence combined.
>
> (Marowitz, 1998, p.8)

Katie Mitchell's regular performers who 'kn[o]w her aesthetic and methodology' (Mermikides, 2013, p.160) have a head start in knowing how she operates as a director and how to help to achieve her vision. Whilst interviewing Dodin for her 2009 text *Directors/Directing*, Shevtsova asks the pertinent question of how 'actors c[a]me to share [the director's] view […] on *Uncle Vanya*?' (Innes and Shevtsova, 2009, p.49). Dodin's reply is that there is a shared collective 'experience' (Innes and Shevtsova, 2009, p.49) of previous Chekhov plays that the Maly Theatre had undertaken and that they had 'absorbed a good deal of Chekhov's world' (Innes and Shevtsova, 2009, p.49). What that shared view might be is, sadly, not revealed, yet it does exemplify the importance of an explicit shared vision.

A director supports actors in embodying their breakthroughs. If, as for Brook, 'all the time [in rehearsals] new means are needed' (Brook, 2008, p.138) what are those? Returning to Longhurst (2010) who linked the life-coach asking their client a question to a discovery being made, if we are to substitute 'life coach' for director and 'client' for actor, then we are able to link to the rehearsal room interaction. This is supported by Nicholas Hytner who states that the director must offer something 'useful' (Hytner, 2010, p.118) and Ian Rickson who suggests that for actors, a director's questioning can 'often open the doors of the imagination, even [if the director feels they] should provide answers' (Rickson, 2012) and as Edward Hall stated to Jonathan Croall 'it's about continually asking questions together' (Croall, 2014, p.10). This can be traced to practitioners such as Brecht, who started his rehearsals with 'nothing', and an intention 'to work naively' (Britton, 2013, p.132), allowing for shared discovery through a series of questions: 'Brecht fired off a series of questions which continually queried his collaborators' assumptions as a model of how one retains liveliness in a

production period' (Britton, 2013, p.135). Linked to flow theory, the director's guidance is the offer of a new challenge as the actor's skill (in relation to the knowledge of the play and character) increases, and questions form part of the director's toolkit of methods. Donnellan encourages his actors to keep their 'head[s] empty' (Innes and Shevtsova, 2009, p.73) to enable a freshness of approach in rehearsals to find new choices and not to play preconceived ideas. For Max Stafford-Clark, when approaching a new play 'you try and start without a concept and hope to find the play as you go along' (Innes and Shevtsova, 2009, p.241). Questioning and shared enquiry through an openness therefore leads to ongoing breakthroughs.

In her non-ethnographical description of rehearsals for Elinor Renfield's *The Cherry Orchard* (National Shakespeare Conservatory, New York 1984), Cole describes a moment where the director's answering of an actor's question 'why' helped to confirm an 'aha' moment:

> After the first playing of the scene, Renfield mainly supports the actor's initial choices: "I love the fact, Amanda, that from the minute you came in you're [seated] on the bench." In answer to the actress' quick response "Why?" Renfield elaborates, "The stillness – to be able to be rooted, not accommodating anybody else." […] The simple statement of support […] becomes a more complex and ambivalent directorial note, more reflective of the density of the text, a suggestion that the actress is rooted and still and also provoked and "driven" by Trofimov.
>
> (Cole, 1992, p.23)

The director verifies this moment, thus benchmarking the directorial frame. To generate a positive interaction, the director's conversations with actors are guided by a growth mindset advanced by Dweck (2012) which, in relation to a rehearsal room, relates to playful approaches. Although Dweck is not writing about actors and directors, her work supports the notion that a

growth mindset provision must be generated to encourage actors to 'love challenges, be intrigued by mistakes, enjoy effort and keep on learning' (Dweck, 2012, p.176). This, coupled with 'curiosity' (Rea, 2014, p.237), allows actors the ownership of the text and character. Director Braham Murray's text *How to Direct a Play* is another addition to the 'how-to' canon and does not add much in relation to breakthroughs, except for a beautiful insight that his rehearsals have 'the aim of making the actors as confident as possible, as quickly as possible' (Murray, 2011, p.52). The supportive atmospheres aimed at above correlate with studies in relation to the 'aha' moment, which have proven that positivity has a profound effect on whether insight occurs:

> A recent fMRI study showed that people are more likely to solve problems with insight if they are in a positive mood when they arrive at the lab than if they are in a neutral or negative one.
>
> (Beeman and Kounios, 2009, p.215)

Actress Danielle Tilley believes that she makes the most discoveries in rehearsals when her director's conversations allow for positive feedback. Discussing her process in playing Amy in Mark Ravenhill's *Mother Clap's Molly House* for the National Theatre (2001), she wants to know from her director what is wrong and right; Nicholas Hytner, the director of that piece, 'tells you both, so that you can go home and work on it' (Hytner, in Croall 2001, p.28). Chapters 5 and 6 identify in the *Close Quarters* process where the director's interventions, questions, setting of atmospheres, and what they establish, support the occurrence of breakthroughs.

2.5 BREAKTHROUGHS AND THE PURSUIT OF TRUTH

Breakthroughs are often linked to the moment when an actor and/or a director discovers a moment of truthfulness within the frame established. Robert Baker-White positions rehearsals as a 'site of truth and authentic knowing' (Baker-White, 1999, p.23) and Merlin states that all acting is to

'breathe that believability into all our scripts and characters […] whether it's *The Green Wing* or *The West Wing'* (Merlin, 2010, p.33) and for Dominic Dromgoole the strength of acting lies in being 'judicious and true in the playing of people and relationships' (Dromgoole, 2017, p.34). Merlin describes truth as a 'tricky word and an even trickier concept' (Merlin, 2011, p.114), and how actors and directors know when a 'truth' has been reached is a messy and non-linear journey.

If truth is measured by Shomit Mitter's definition as 'what the actor construes as real' (Mitter, 1992, p.7), paraphrasing Stanislavski's notion of truth being 'what we sincerely believe in our own and in our partners' hearts' (Stanislavski, 2010, p.154), this could be deemed problematic for the rehearsal room, as it could reduce the discovery to a personal level for the actor and may oversimplify the situation, rejecting the need for a director's verification, a production frame or the playwright's intention. As director Annabel Arden states, actors are individuals and need to be 'made into a company' (Arden, in Simonsen, 2017, p.19) and therefore Mitter's definition also rejects a company cohesiveness in a unified playing style. Merlin instead gives an actor's perspective and defines truth as searching for the lure of a moment where the actor can say '"Ah! Now I get it. Now I understand why the character says those words and executes these actions"' (Merlin, 2015, p.58), finding a rightness for the moment.

Distilling what is meant by truth in acting for our purpose is therefore nebulous. Are we looking for Merlin's 'lure' to unlock the truth? Soto-Morettini in her text *The Philosophical Actor* (2010) dedicates her first chapter to a philosophical and syllogistic approach to truth. Beginning with the statement that truth is 'elastic' (2010: 20) and arguing that actors should not be trapped by a single definition as Mitter does above, Soto-Morettini's search for truth is related to her need to discover what makes something click in rehearsal when there's a 'sense of feeling that a scene is going well' (Soto-Morettini, 2010, p.30). As far back as 1968, Peter Brook was also informing us that 'truth in the theatre is always on the move' (Brook, 2008,

p.157) as genres and playwriting styles alter. If there is a sense of something working, then it is truthful *relative to the context* of the play, its genre and the production frames. More difficult moments to pin down are relative ones: 'character might only emerge, fully, in the context of a collectively imagined world where each participant reinforces the character of all the others' (Brook, 2008, p.99). Therefore, breakthroughs in relation to finding a relative truth are useful when actors are in cohesion with one another.

Truth is linked to discovery for Rossmanith where 'psychological depth, emotionality and believability' (Rossmanith, 2003, p.111) are its key drivers. Rossmanith goes on to argue that to discover the subtext of the scene is related to finding the truth of the moment and thereby making a discovery to unlock the text. This, coupled with understanding the 'underlying emotion' (Rossmanith, 2003, p.114) of a moment, creates believability for the actor where a sense of truth can emerge. Turning to a director's opinion, which contradicts Mitter's, Simon Godwin states that the director's role should be one of monitoring truth and when this occurs the play 'works' and a breakthrough discovery moment is forged. Godwin likens this to the freshness that Rea (2015) proposes, and links this to finding the truth of a moment:

> When the play works […] it's like even I am seeing it for the first time […] probably something to do with spontaneity which is essentially the aim; to get to a level of relaxation that a line, a looking, a moment, a way of listening can just be fresh. That's the truth.
>
> (Godwin, 2015)

Truth on stage should 'evoke belief' for an audience (Stanislavski, 2010, p.18) and therefore the truth can only be relative to the 'context' (Soto-Morettini, 2010, p.36) of the production and its style, in order for the audience to believe in the piece. Soto-Morettini has been the major contributor to this part of the field, but other practitioners such as John

Gillett are also keen to point this out. In his 'how-to' text Gillett states that actors must 'play people fully and truthfully within the demands of the particular language and style of each play' (Gillett, 2014, p.xxiv). Merlin, in her accessible *Complete Stanislavski Toolkit* repeats and reinforces her concept of relative truth in the form of a 'truthful context for the action – be it *Star Wars* or *West Wing* or *Woyzeck'* (Merlin, 2011, p.114). Similarly, for Uta Hagen, it is about finding a stage reality relative to the genre, which she defines as a 'selected reality' (Hagen, 1991, p.42). In the genre of British pantomime (a far cry from the psychological realism of early Ibsen and Chekhov) the children must believe in the relative truth of the mythical story and outlandish characterisation, for example, even though logically there is little real-world verisimilitude. Katie Mitchell retells a story of a neuroscientist observing an early career production of hers and observed that there

> […] were two different types of acting going on: one was lifelike and the other was "more heightened, self-conscious and theatrical". He could cope with either he said, but the moment that the brain struggled most was when the actors lurch between one style and another: in these moments, he lost all engagement with what was going on in the action of the play.
>
> (Mitchell, 2009, p.179)

Therefore, a cohesive acting style within the relative truth of a production, dictated by its genre is vital for an audience to believe in the production.

A useful rethinking of truth comes from Nikolai Demidov, who Stanislavski termed his 'closest associate in teaching and research' (Malaev-Babel and Laskina, 2016, p.1). Whilst writing earlier than the practitioners and academics above, Demidov's writings have only recently been translated into English and are gaining traction in the West. Demidov redefines truth as 'authentic experiencing' (Demidov, 2016, p.46) where an '"authentic truth" [is] living naturally in unnatural conditions' (Demidov, 2016, p.60). Actors in a pantomime find a size and scale of an authentic truth within that genre.

Ross Prior (2012) reflects Silverberg's (1999) notion that training should 'empower the student with the ability to find his or her own truth' (Prior, 2012, p.35). This concerns training the actor to be self-reflective and find their own moments of truth without a director or an acting coach always needing to be present to verify their choices. Discovering 'truth' is therefore the end product of many moments of revelation.

2.6 DIRECTORIAL FRAMES AND RULES GUIDING BREAKTHROUGHS

Academic Peter Boenisch reframes the process of directing from 'what it is that "the director does" or what they should do, to what *directing does and may do*' (Boenisch, 2015, p.5, his emphasis). For this thesis, what directing *does* is to create a frame to act as a benchmark for directors to measure the relative truth of the actor against, and create a frame for actors to discover within. For actor/trainer Rea, the rehearsal process is 'a series of controlled failures that gradually reveal to you the best way of telling the story' (Rea, 2015, p.178). If we are to be guided within this frame, it is therefore possible to come to certain conclusions to answer subsidiary research question three on the meaningfulness of a discovery. Zarrilli relates the creation of rules with the idea that the director brings a 'logic [to] the production as a whole' (Daboo, Loukes and Zarrilli, 2013, p.13) and that 'each project has its own requirements and that one must be ready to research and rediscover the basic rules of theatrical engagement for each new creation' (Miller, 2007, p.105). This production logic can then be the frame in which discoveries can be verified.

British theatre director James Macdonald creates a frame in order to shape the potential breakthroughs he can make in the rehearsal room with his actors by way of a pre-rehearsal workshop period. This period concentrates 'on practical problem-solving and design […]. A lot of the basic production ideas [are] generated at that time' (Macdonald, 2008, p.142).

Macdonald believes that it is difficult to create the rules and frames within the main body of rehearsals due to the short four weeks rehearsals within the UK system[11], so these must be decided prior to rehearsals. If, as for British director Gwenda Hughes, 'rehearsals are a process of experiment and exploration' (Hughes, 2011, p.16) then the need to discover the 'rules of the [production]' (Macdonald, 2008, p.142) prior to rehearsals is paramount as, for Wendy Lesser, the 'director's role [is] the primary interpreter of a play' (Lesser, 1997, p.4). Making these decisions in advance of rehearsals allows the actors to position their findings against the bounded rules of the production's frame or concept. Mitchell, like MacDonald, also undertakes a week's workshop period as 'workshops are about exploring ideas' (Mitchell, 2009, p.103) which often take place three months prior to a rehearsal period, if the play is written. Writing for up-and-coming directors and those in training, Mitchell is one of the few directors who gives guidance on structuring a workshop period in her 2009 text *The Director's Craft*. For Mitchell the workshops are the 'starting point for rehearsals' (Mitchell, 2009, p.103) and are the space to 'create a maximum environment to discover […] and [think] how I will take that discovery into practical exercises I can set the actors' (Mitchell, 2015, l.81). For her, this relates to discovering the events of a scene, which are the 'deeper structures that run beneath the surface of the words' (Mitchell, 2009, p.8) and are key moments in the play that affect all of the characters, and without which the scene(s) would not be able to move forward in the way that they do. This comes from a deep investigation of the text prior to rehearsals, allowing Mitchell to own and be 'in charge' (Mitchell, 2009, p.6) of the play. Inferring from this, Mitchell requires that discoveries need to be contextualised by the directorial vision, giving the actors an anchor for their discoveries, mirroring Macdonald above.

[11] Lyn Gardner states that 'British theatre has become so much more interesting since mainstream rehearsal periods changed around the 1980s from the two or three weeks that was a legacy of the repertory model. But those who are just starting out – and essentially inventing the future of British theatre – remain the most squeezed, and it is hard to be inventive under so much pressure' (Gardner, 2019, p.7).

Mitchell therefore sees the discovery period in the workshop period, rather than the main rehearsal period. Lyn Gardner, Associate Editor of *The Stage*, warns of undertaking a workshop period if the purpose of this is to focus on product over exploration:

> You discover very little when you are in a rush. Even the sharing culture of funded R&D [research and development] weeks can be problematic when you know that on Friday afternoon venue bookers, producers and artistic directors – the people who are crucial to the future life of your show – will be in the room and you need to tempt them to commit to co-producing or offering performance dates.
>
> (Gardner, 2019, p.7)

Catherine Alexander, documenting her time on Complicité's *The Elephant Vanishes* (2003), comments on the workshop period as 'extensive provisional "sketching" […] [which] feels like an archaeological excavation and is nearly always slow and painstaking' (Harvie and Lavender, 2010, p.63). Slow and painstaking it may be, but this sketching builds the frames and rules for the main rehearsal period. Director Hugh Morrison is governed by the needs of the playwright and genre and contrasts '[from George Bernard] Shaw's logic, linear thinking and cause and effect to the non-events and metaphor and intuitions of Beckett' (Morrison, 1984, p.104). Conventions and frames therefore must be clear within the genre, be it pantomime, farce, or realism, as the concept of discovering a 'truth' is relative to the genre as discussed in 2.4 above. These frames allow the actor to have a clear roadmap.

Director Richard Maxwell of the New York City Players is explicit about his rehearsal frames, and that his actors must work within them. The following is taken from one of Maxwell's notes sessions of *The End of Reality* (2006):

> R: Why the pause?
>
> Tom: I'm trying to do what you want me to do.

R: Well, I'm trying to get you to do what you want to do *within what I want you to do.* So it's a constant struggle. It's a free world and everything… but it's not going to happen… it's a free country… but you have to do as I say.

(Harvie and Lavender, 2010, p.196)

Maxwell aims to frame his production's rules and ensure that actors stay within them. It must not be assumed that to articulate what the frame is leads to an easy marriage, as there may be disagreements within the frame. McAuley makes a striking observation in her ethnographic account of *Toy Symphony* (Company B, 2007) of how the contrasting world views of director and author led to a dispute in relation to the music needed for the production:

> this is a really huge problem because it goes to the heart of the difference in emphasis between [director] Neil's world view and [writer] Michael's. Neil was happy for the masque to be pastoral, comic, folksy […] while Michael was clearly drawn to showing the roots of [character] Roland's (or his own?) creativity coming from a much darker and more murky place.
>
> (McAuley, 2012, p.171)

Clearly, to play both would be impossible, yet both are valid interpretations. Just as the world-view of the author should be considered when helping to frame a production's rules, within which breakthroughs may take place, each creative member of a company (including actors) will potentially have different world views. Therefore, the directorial frames surrounding the play must be those through which all other decisions and breakthroughs must be filtered.

Finding the clues in the text to decide on the production frame is therefore a form of 'code cracking' (Stern, 2000, p.9) for directors, and the pre-rehearsal work for a director is to 'decode its performativity' (Sidiropoulou, 2019, p.86); building from Stanislavski, this suggests that like

a riddle, 'works have to be decoded' (Stanislavski, 2008, p.99). James Thomas calls this the 'internal plausibility' (Thomas, 2016, p.18), whereby all genres and styles must live within their own rules, logic and codes. Hal Prince, when producing Stephen Sondheim's musical *Follies*, 'set our own ground rules and lived by them' (Prince, 2017, p.164). It is therefore the director's responsibility to determine the frames from the textual clues where 'the text is written as if coded and [it] needs time and care to crack the code' (Cole, 1992, p.11).

This code-cracking can also be traced back to Stanislavski's practice as well as his theoretical writings. Whyman (2011) discusses the problems that developed from Stanislavski trying to direct the 1907 symbolist play *The Drama of Life* with an internalised psychological technique. As the acting style was not congruent with the genre's codes, the 'actors became […] fearful of what was required of them, too focused internally and there was no justification for the absence of gesture' (Whyman, 2011, p.29). Cole also identified code-cracking at work in her observations of *The Cherry Orchard*, where she saw that 'a way has tentatively been found to play a Chekhovian scene of listening and not listening, understanding and not understanding' (Cole, 1992, p.29). What Cole articulates here is a need to unearth and crack the textual clues, to guide the rehearsal room choice and enable actors and directors to undertake Crawford's notion of Horizontal Projection, whereby creatives 'regularly look to the artistic horizon to seemingly set their coordinates for onward journeying' (Crawford, 2015, p.191). This imagining of the performance can only come about if one knows at which horizon one is aiming.

Rehearsal methods and exercises are therefore not an end in themselves but chosen specifically to unlock further meaning of a scene or moment within the frames established. The director must then be open to identify and verify choices (including breakthroughs) as it is the 'ability of [the] director to identify and utilize certain images for the creation of meaning' (Johnson, 2011, p.218), otherwise breakthroughs may be missed,

or not recognised for their significance. Daniel Johnson also suggests that the meaning is embodied within the text, and that the company are searching for *aletheia* (an 'un-hiddenness' in the concept of revealing the meaning). This relates to the notion that each production (and genre) has its own inner logic that needs to be unearthed. Croall highlights this in relation to Sean Mathias' production of the pantomime *Aladdin* produced by London's Old Vic in 2004:

> Sean talks of the difficulties actors have in switching to pantomime mode. 'If they get too psychological about it, if there's too much character exploration, the whole fabric dissolves […]. You have to do something very sculptured and clear, in bold colours, and then find out what works and what doesn't. It's no good doing it as if it were a straight play.
>
> (Croall, 2014, p.115)

In this example, the production frame is governed not only by the directorial frames, but by the pantomime genre's 'rules' that in turn guide the director in making choices prior to rehearsals. The breakthrough should therefore marry with the production concept. The inner world work of the actors in the rehearsal room must therefore marry with the outer production concept. With the inner and outer convention(s) of the production clearly established, the frames guide the whole process of discovering the relative truth.

In order to ascertain levels of awareness and how meaningful a breakthrough is, actors should feel as though they are taking ownership of the discoveries, even if tacitly they know that they are being guided by the director. If the director is likened to a parent who has to let go, then the ownership of the production must move from the director to the actor. 'Every actor must be his own director' (Stanislavski, 2008, p.113), and the actor must be 'autonomous' (Moore, 2006, p.96), especially in film and television, where there is little or no rehearsal. However, theatre is the medium of this study and for Mitchell, her goal is 'for the actors to be self-directing. They

should be able to come off stage after a performance and assess what they have done' (Mitchell, 2009, p.186). This must, however, begin at the training stage: 'All I want is for [my acting students] to be free – not to seek approval from me or their peers – just to submit to the visions thrown up by the text and to give in to their impulses and storytelling' (Merlin, 2013, p.160). Directors therefore need to find tactics to ensure actors are self-directing and reflective, and aware of their processes. When Stanislavski directed, he 'pretended ignorance in order to force the actor's independent decision. [Maria Kebel] called it his "pedagogical cunning"' (Carnicke, 2009, p.203). Alfreds implies that the director's discoveries must be shared and owned by the actors; this is about firstly 'coax[ing] the realisation' (Alfreds, 2007, p.143), to allow actors to embody the director's breakthroughs which, in turn, means that it now *means* something through an awareness.

2.6.1. ACTORS FINDING TRUTH WITHIN THE SUBTEXT

Actors make breakthroughs when links are made between the dialogue uttered by their characters and its underlying subtext, which often alters the tone and physicality of a character in a particular moment. Pavis advances that meaning can be made 'between different semiotic systems such as verbal and non-verbal, symbolic and iconic' (Pavis, 1992, p.29) suggesting that the truth of a moment can come from what the company or individual believe to be the appropriate subtext for that moment. For Pavis, the 'non-verbal behaviour has so great an influence on the spectator's understanding of the […] text' (Pavis, 1992, p.32), thus highlighting the importance of the non-verbal signifiers on generating meaning. Stanislavski stated that 'the line of the role is taken from the subtext, not the text itself' (Stanislavski, 2008, p.118). For Pavis, this is the difference between the dramatic text as written and the performance text of what is visible and audible which connects to the current neuro-scientific work of non-verbal communication (nvc). Michael Chekhov and Stanislavski state the importance for the actor to radiate, where appropriate, their subtext and inner feelings

to an audience through nvc; without this communication, nuances of the moment may be shallow. Radiation must 'give out everything [the actor] has inside' (Chekhov, in White, 2009, p.33). Certain 'aha' moments rely on discovering the appropriate level of radiation to reveal inner thoughts and feelings to an audience, whilst maintaining the theatrical truth that a fellow character would not pick up on these clues.

The nvc and accompanying gestural language as required by the character's circumstance must marry with the scene's written (verbal) communication. This leads an actor to discover the appropriate subtext and underlying 'truths' that the character is subconsciously revealing. Whilst Rick Kemp is often repetitious in his re-examining of practitioners through a neuroscientific lens, he does raise several salient points in relation to acting practice, which impact on potential breakthrough moments in rehearsals:

> […] an actor's task […] is to dig beneath the surface, explore the forces that are in play, the desires, fears and emotions that underpin an exchange […] and then make these forces manifest through the vocal, spatial and gestural means at their disposal.
>
> (Kemp, 2012, p.79)

Kemp also suggests that the 'meaning of the scene' (Kemp, 2012, p.45) is linked to nvc and subtext. Beginning with the premise that 'all acting is embodied' (Kemp, 2012, p.xvi), Kemp argues that the actor's main challenge is to turn written text into an embodied expression of that text' (Kemp, 2012, p.63) and concludes that discoveries are made when all these threads come together and 'consciously-chosen nvc appear[s] credible' (Kemp, 2012, p.31). When discovering behavioural choices that match the needs of the character and their subtext (from the combination of what is thought, felt, or said) then these discoveries are useful. Christie (2015) argues that in a text-based rehearsal process the discovery of the character's experience (and subtext) is important: the words are often said before the genuine experience of the moment, whereas the experience of the moment needs to be discovered

before the words are said. Meaningful breakthroughs are therefore related to the discovery of a congruent nvc/spoken text relationship working within the frames.

2.6.2 ACTORS DISCOVERING THROUGH UNCERTAINTY AND IMPULSE

Accidents and surprises in the rehearsal room must not be ignored, as if an actor cuts themselves off from these then they 'cut themselves off from uncertainty' (Christie, 2015, p.159), and a rehearsal process needs to embrace uncertainty, as for Brook, uncertainties can create moments using 'all the best possibilities that [the actors] have discovered' (Selbourne, 2010, p.189). These potential moments of discovery can then potentially forge a new path and lead to a change of directorial approach to the rehearsal and therefore feed into later, more conscious, profound 'aha' moments. Gordon (1961) suggests that as children, we follow impulses *uncertainly* whilst also accepting these as part of life's daily flow. As adults, Gordon argues that this leaves us, but if actors are to respond as playfully as children (not childish, but childlike) then directors and actors should cultivate impulsiveness as a rehearsal philosophy for breakthroughs to occur.

For many actors and directors, a playful approach to rehearsals can allow ideas to emerge organically (therefore engendering organic 'aha' moments), which accrue from the actor's impulse in relation to the text. This is as opposed to a nebulous talent which may guide this and therefore,

> discovering impulses through active partnerships to allow what lies behind the words to become manifest, gives meaning and style more room to develop as players evolve with the play.
>
> (Callery, 2015, p.67)

Constructing a collaborative rehearsal room that is 'joyful and infused with enthusiasm' (Rea, 2015, l.71), allows for a generous give-and-take of ideas and creative discovery. Ginters posits a company that knows each other is

more creative as their familiarity, linked with a facilitating director, allows for openness and sensitivity, which means that for a breakthrough to happen it is 'not strictly true that it came out of "nowhere"' (Ginters, 2006, p.69) as it 'requires particular skills on the part of the director and generosity of spirit on the part of the rest of the group' (McAuley, 2012, p.231). These skills are ones that are worked on (as opposed to hoping that a 'magical' talent is at work) and consciously embodied as a company. Director James Macdonald terms an instinct a 'hunch' (Macdonald, 2008, p.146) which he follows. For Gordon, exploring Synectics, hunches are an 'emotional response distrusted in science' (Gordon, 1961, p.135). However, in the arts these instincts are followed and built upon, as the *Close Quarters* observation finds.

2.6.3 DISCOVERIES SURROUNDING HONOURING STRUCTURE, PUNCTUATION AND SYNTAX

Director James Macdonald enjoys writers present in his rehearsal room as you 'can very often clarify what's going on in the text' (Macdonald, 2008, p.147) because 'what you're always trying to put on stage is the spirit of the writer' (Macdonald, 2008, p.149). Yet if the writer is dead, what then? A breakthrough needs to be defined in relation to a production's frames, which may include the writer's potential intention, and needs to be verified as such. In text-based theatre, the primacy of a writer's intention is sometimes a contentious issue. To what extent should the writer be revered? The Samuel Beckett Estate contract, for example, states categorically:

> There shall be no additions, omissions, changes in the sex of the characters or of the performers as specified in the text [...] or alterations of any kind or nature in the manuscript and presentation of the play as written.
>
> (cited in Keramidas, 2008, p.198)

This leaves no doubt as to how Beckett's intention needs to be honoured by his estate through reverence to the original text.

When Macdonald discusses breakthroughs made that 'make most sense' (Macdonald, 2008, p.152), these were linked to finding possibilities within the theatrical potential of the language and text through honouring the structure, syntax, punctuation and choice of words. The potency of the choice is to be unearthed from the text, like an archaeologist carefully dusting the layers in their trench. McAuley (1999) states that heeding the playwright's stage directions can give clues towards the creation of meaning within a scene and that 'staging conditions [are] inferred from textual patterns' (Fitzpatrick, 2006, p.129). Playwright Simon Stephens desires that stage directions 'provoke creativity and charge imagination' (Stephens, 2016, p.263). The playwright therefore need not be in the room physically to help the actor and can embed textual clues, thus directing the actor from within. A breakthrough may occur when these clues align. Clarity of thought here comes from detailed textual analysis and honouring what director Alfreds terms 'logic text', whereby actors and directors 'make sense of the text at its simplest, logical and grammatically structured level. [This can be] applied anywhere in the rehearsal process' (Alfreds, 2010, p.196). Benedetti sets out the need for honouring the punctuation as the text's 'musical pattern' (Benedetti, 2008, p.88) whereby meaning is generated from the punctuation and structure. Honouring the logic of the text in this way allows the actor and director to get closer to the heart of a moment. McAuley observed a literal 'aha' moment during her rehearsal study of *Toy Symphony* in relation to the logic text of where a word is placed in the sentence:

> Richard [an actor] picked out the word "right" in that speech, asking "Why is it there? What does it mean?" Then he said "Aha!" That's the moment he realises that it was his self-analysis that has silenced him. So Nina [character] has led him to this insight […] Richard's perception and skill and craft led him to pick up this little word that a reader may have skated over and he then used it to carry a huge weight of important emotional, character and plot meaning.
>
> (McAuley, 2012, p.66)

Several examples later in this thesis validate this idea, as breakthroughs were made in relation to discovering textual detail(s).

2.7 ACTORS AND THEIR ARTICULATION OF BREAKTHROUGHS

Carnicke states the difficulties certain actors have in articulating their practice:

> Actors know more than they can say. Acting, like riding a bicycle, is easier to do than to explain […] Oral tradition that allows for verbal approximations, subtle restatements, parables, and metaphors encodes 'tacit knowledge' better than clear expository prose.
>
> (Carnicke, 2009, p.72)

Dodin's expectation is that the actors he is training should be able verbally to articulate their discovery: 'actors have to learn to say it. I make my actors put their thoughts into words.' (Innes and Shevtsova, 2009, p.44). The need for clarity through verbal articulation is vital for Dodin to aid the rehearsal process by ensuring that any discoveries are shared and is then able to be worked on as an ensemble. Former Royal Shakespeare Company Artistic Director Michael Boyd also comments that 'there is a fear on the part of some artists of exploring their art – a fear of demystifying […] and [they are] therefore not so free' (Boyd, in Radosavljevic, 2013, p.37); if they do articulate and reflect on their work, however, 'huge quantum leaps' (Boyd, in Radosavljevic, 2013, p.37) can be made.

The notion that embodied 'craft knowledge is privileged over propositional knowledge' (Rossmanith, 2008, p.148) is explored by Rossmanith who concludes that how actors *describe* their work *after* the event can be very different from when they are actually *experiencing* the event. Merlin states that, 'one of the reasons so few actors talk, let alone, write about their process, is arguably their fear of dispelling the mystery of their own intuition, impulse and spontaneity' (Merlin, 2012, p.15).

Practitioners find clearer articulation of their work following the rehearsal's 'conscious discourse' (Rossmanith, 2008, p.149) as opposed to 'less conscious discourse' (2008, p.149) whilst in the moment. This stresses the importance of using follow-up interviews in the methods of this study (Chapter 3) and Rossmanith is clear that there is much further training to be done in aiding actor-trainers to support their students in the articulation of their practice. Prior articulates the different types of knowledge that acting-teachers and students may pass through, yet concludes that 'there is therefore limited capacity for the learners to become empowered in their own understandings if they are unsure where these techniques or approaches originate' (Prior, 2012, p.37). In order for actors to be aware of the importance of their breakthroughs and other choices, there must be a consciousness of their actions and perhaps the methods of how they arrive at that point.

2.7.1 DUAL CONSCIOUSNESS AS A VEHICLE FOR ARTICULATION

Dual consciousness allows an actor to articulate their breakthrough moments in the rehearsal room, and their tacit knowledge. French philosopher Denis Diderot, inspired by seeing David Garrick in the 1770s, was interested in how emotions were believably portrayed to an audience within the acting styles of the time. This formally began the ongoing debate of whether an actor is in control of their emotions, or whether the emotions are in control of the actor. Diderot concludes that the actor must be in control when performing. If in control, the actor is present and the character has not subsumed the actor. Therefore, they are able to critically identify their 'aha' moments and articulate and test their efficacy with the director in rehearsals. Writing in 1773, Diderot states that,

> they say an actor is all the better for being excited, for being angry. I deny it. He is best when he imitates anger. Actors impress the public not when they are furious, but when they play fury well […] What passion itself fails to do, passion well imitated accomplishes.

(Diderot, 2011, p.108)

Dick McCaw's research states that actors must be able to find means of evaluating their performance. McCaw suggests that actors 'can experience and observe themselves at the same time' (McCaw, 2014, p.36). This is essential as the actors need to articulate and capture their findings. This is the same for Rossmanith (2006), as there is the discovery of the meaning of the text and also the discovery of the character creation. The notion of merging, McCaw continues, is a more useful concept for the actor and 'distinguishes truthful acting from external imitation' (McCaw, 2014, p.36). Benedetti, as cited in McCaw, describes merging as the 'sense of oneself in the role and the role in oneself' (McCaw, 2014, p.36), building on Stanislavski who describes the 'joy when the merging of the actor with his part happens' (Stanislavski, 2008, p.100). Merging allows for the articulation of discoveries, as actor and character are both present and one is not subsumed by another. 'Jean Benedetti talks about a "Real I" (the actor) and a "Dramatic I" (the character) and starts with the admission that the actor cannot actually be someone else' (Soto-Morettini, 2010, p.86) and therefore this dual consciousness allows for articulation to happen as the actor is not subsumed by their character.

If the actor is therefore 'simultaneously aware of self and character' (Kemp, 2012, p.32), 'aha' moments can be consciously recognised, tested and explored in rehearsals by the actor. Returning to impulse, John Britton notes the following:

> For a performer to respond, in the moment, to the reality of an impulse, she must first notice that impulse. She must be attentive to the ebb and flow of impulses in her body and to the unfolding dynamic of what is happening around her.
>
> (Britton, 2013, p.281)

If creating a character is a 'complicated, nuanced art' (Merlin, 2013, p.26) then actors must be in control of this messy, non-linear creation and

its impulses, not be controlled by it. Returning to flow, whereby one must never be subsumed in one's work, and one must always be conscious of the work undertaken, this allows for an individual to receive reflexive feedback through reflecting 'in action' (Schon, 1982, p.279). This is especially important as actors' breakthroughs are often linked to discovering the appropriate emotional pitching of a moment. This may be in terms of their emotional state at the start of the scene, or how this may shift as they encounter the key events affecting their character's situation. In the current field of Stanislavski studies the term 'character' has been replaced by the concept of *deistvovat* (which translates as 'to take action'). In his later work, Stanislavski led actors through an action-based approach, with the 'lure' of the emotion being grounded in action, rather than creating an emotion by emotional memory techniques foregrounded by the exponents of Method acting[12]. If an actor can find the right action, this 'will generate emotion' (Van Den Bosch, 2013, p.12). Eric Hetzler's 2008 study of actors and their use of emotions found that, although actors are in an emotional state, they did not see this as a key area of their work and wished to remain 'in control' (Hetzler, 2008, p.62). Returning to Hetzler's study, participants saw 'emotion as a by-product of the reaction of their character and circumstances' (Hetzler, 2008, p.65) foregrounding action and givens of the scene. The actors in Hetzler's study are primarily interested in being in the moment, that is, 'fully engaged in the entirety of the performance – the action of the story as well as the reactions of the audience' (Hetzler, 2008, p.73).

Dual consciousness also allows for a control of the emotional state. If Hetzler's 2008 study concluded that one of an actor's key priorities is how characters relate to other characters, then the need to make breakthroughs in a rehearsal must link to conscious interaction between actors who are aware of their decision making, not getting lost and subsumed in a 'motor

[12] The Method acting tradition derived from the Moscow Art Theatre's 1923 American tour and taught practitioners such as Stella Adler and Lee Strasberg emotional (affective) memory techniques, whereby actors draw upon personal experiences to general emotion. Richard 'Boleslavsky had been given permission by Stanislavski to give a series of lectures on the System' (French and Bennett, 2016, p.524) which paved the way to transmitting Stanislavski's earlier methods.

storm [of] neurosis' (Demidov, 2016, p.55), and losing themselves in the process. British theatre director Howard Davies emphasises that dual consciousness is important for the serving of the play as well as the actor's role within the play. This 'dual responsibility […] work[s] better for the storytelling of the play' (Davies, 2014, p.19), as for him, when the actor is conscious of their decision making, they are able to serve the demands of the text in a manner which is not self-indulgent. For Davies this is what makes a decision a more useful one in rehearsals, since the actor is not serving their own indulgences, but that of the play's needs. Therefore, in relation to subsidiary research question four, What levels of awareness of breakthrough moments might participants have, both during the rehearsal process, and upon reflection?, there are vehicles by which (through the notion of dual consciousness) actors can be aware of their own practice. Chapters 5 and 6 outline and analyse concrete examples of such moments where actors have not been subsumed by their characters and consciously reflect upon and articulate their breakthrough moments.

2.8 PLAY, RISK-TAKING, AND LETTING GO IN AIDING A DISCOVERY

Few academics and practitioners discuss 'letting go', play, and risk-taking in creating their characters and enabling discoveries. Rea (2015) posits seven qualities that actors should possess which are: warmth, generosity, enthusiasm, danger, presence, grit and charisma. These qualities serve the actor in their rehearsal room work. Rea argues that these qualities can be developed and honed as part of the actor's craft and are equally as important to creating outstanding performances as the character-building methodological tools of Bella Merlin's Toolkit. Rea does not always go on to develop his theories as to how these qualities can generate 'aha' moments in rehearsal or performance. For example, he believes the actor finds something when 'taking more risks' (Rea, 2015, l.65) but does not go on to

describe what these high-risk peaks may look like, and what results may accrue.

Risk-taking can be linked also to notions of danger, as outlined by Rea, and courage, with risk taking involving 'going there, [which] takes courage' (Ginters, 2006, p.55). This aligns with the notion of 'willing vulnerability' (Merlin, 2013, p.24), whereby the actor must be encouraged to take risks and be *willing* in their vulnerability in order to discover a truth in the moment, supported by psychologist Csíkszentmihályi, who details that creativity involves the 'willingness to take risks' (Csíkszentmihályi, 2013, p.72). Risk-taking, which allows for breakthroughs to occur, is the notion that an actor has to 'let go' (Daboo, Loukes and Zarrilli, 2001, p.40) in relation to risk is an area of interest, whereby the unconscious takes over from conscious thought. In rehearsals, this is where the conscious groundwork has been undertaken and, in particular, through rehearsal room run-throughs where the actor needs to 'trust […] one's brain to do the correct thing' (Austin, 1999, p.359). This trust enables the actor to believe that any previous breakthroughs (now consolidated) have allowed them to get to a stage whereby they can communicate with fellow actors in a supportive ensemble atmosphere, and allow the scene to unfold organically and somatically through automation and dynamic listening. Merlin defines dynamic listening as follows:

> (1) I do something to you (Action); (2) you instinctively respond to my action (Reaction); and (3) you then consciously decide how you're going to respond to me (Decision). Based on that Decision, you then (1) execute a new Action on me: (2) I have an instinctive Reaction to what you've done, and (3) I then take a decision about how I'm going to respond to you. And so it goes, ad infinitum.
>
> (Merlin, 2010, p.97)

Letting go relates to living truthfully within this listening cycle whereby an actor does not consciously draw upon their rehearsal room work, but allows themselves to be present and respond to the action and given circumstances of all that surrounds them.

2.9 DISCOVERIES WITHIN THE MISE-EN-SCÈNE

Acting in the truth of the moment is also linked to the truth of the stage life and therefore incorporates the actor's relationship to the production's *mise-en-scène* as laid down by Pavis (1992) whereby meaning is produced through the interaction of all signifying systems in the production[13]. This is important as the character has to inhabit the scenographic world, and as one task of the actor is to be present and open, then the *mise-en-scène* and the scenography in both rehearsal and production will also work on the actor and potential breakthroughs may occur. Therefore, one of a director's roles is to create the production concept. As Robert Knopf describes, the 'director's primary responsibility is for the "big picture" of the production' (Knopf, 2017, p.5) and that focus must be on keeping 'all collaborators on track to this goal, the **core action**' (Knopf, 2017, p.5, original emphasis) or, for director van Hove, the 'core idea' (Bennett and Massai, 2018, p.9). Throughout the ethnographic study it is noted that a discovery is meaningful if the breakthrough is aligned to the core action as set by the director, if it unifies 'the actor's understanding of action with the playwright's concept of action as an overall engine for the production […] which therefore also includes the designer's notion of stage action' (Knopf, 2017, p.5).Therefore, the relative truth that the actors need to portray is linked to the needs and demands of both the play and the production concept: its core action.

[13] In 1991, Elaine Aston and George Savona laid out their version of semiotics (with its basis in Ferdinand de Saussure's linguistic sign system) for the theatre. Primarily designed so that students in higher education had a framework in which to encode and decode performance and production, *Theatre as a Sign System* lays out that meaning is not merely encoded within the language, but from all aspects of the production including body language and the *mise-en-scène*, whereby the *signifier* could be a word, an image, a gesture. The *signified* is the concept that the signifier is representing.

A potential breakthrough may occur from the interaction of all signifying systems – the props, costumes, tone of voice, atmospheres and moods, amongst others, generating a particular meaning or contextualising the scenic truth for an actor: 'how many times have we seen productions where there is a lavish intricate set covering the stage and yet the actors remain down centre, hardly exploring or using the surrounding architecture?' (Bogart and Landau, in Evans, 2015, p.142). The physical architecture and scenography can trigger a breakthrough moment if it relates to the character's given circumstances, wants and needs. If related to the rules and conventions of the production, then a breakthrough may be made in relation to how the actor perceives their world and is able to live within it truthfully. McAuley in *Not Magic But Work* (2012) includes a chapter entitled 'The Sign Systems Come Together', describing how the production elements and their precision support actors to live truthfully within their world. Cole states that the importance of props 'is never forgotten' (Cole, 1992, p.16) and expands on how director Robert Wilson is concerned with scenography to tell the story of the play, in his observation of the 1985 production *Golden Windows*:

> Wilson has said, "I am always concerned with how the total stage picture looks at any given moment" […]. In the […] technical rehearsals, these elements often war for attention from the director and yet they are all utterly dependent on each other. When a bench is misplaced, or a microphone goes off, or a special is not turned on at the right moment, or a prop is missing, or an actor fails to appear in his appointed position, the production is helplessly diminished.
>
> (Cole, 1992, p.16)

This is not a case of accidental meaning-making. Using a semiotic approach, the signs on stage generate a meaning that audiences can interpret. Those signs (props, inflections, moves, costumes) are carefully considered and made as conscious design choices. The marrying of the inner world of the actor's work with the outer production elements creates the world which the actor can inhabit truthfully, and one in which the actors are as much shaping

as being shaped by the world around them. The notion that 'it is always the situation that determines the behaviour' (Ostermeier, 2016, p.149) is of importance to this thesis, as the actor immerses themselves into the world of the play and is then able to 'live accurately and truthfully within the events [of the play]' (Thomas, 2016, p.80). Scenographic choices may trigger breakthroughs in technical rehearsals, relevant to the subsidiary question of when and how breakthroughs occur, and how they are meaningful.

Several moments of the congruence of the rehearsal work to its *mise-en-scène* throughout *Close Quarters* led to breakthroughs, as discussed in Chapters 5 and 6. The actors must therefore be embedded into the world of the play to make breakthroughs if, as Svoboda argues 'scenography is an interplay of time, place, body and light' (Svoboda, in Snow, 2006, p.48) and 'information on the inside is tied to physical clues and triggers on the outside' (Snow, 2006, p.250). The 'inside' relates to internal breakthroughs made by the actor on the rehearsal room floor; this encoding must be considered in the achievement of optimum flow states. Stressing the importance of the *mise-en-scène*, van Hove has two parallel working groups prior to his production: 'one is concerned with dramaturgy […] and the other with what I call the visual dramaturgy […] the visual language is at least as important as the words' (Bennett and Massai, 2018, p.5). This idea of the two working groups (with only van Hove working across both) ensures that the inner and outer world are explored and linked.

Noting the blocking within the *mise-en-scène*, Rossmanith's 1998 observations identified at one moment that the scene did not feel 'right', because the interaction was not correct: 'neither the actors, nor Tony [director] "felt" as if the exchange had been "natural"' (Rossmanith, 2006, p.85). A meaningful interaction between actor/character can relate to a breakthrough moment for actors in relation to their blocking. Cole stated that in her study of *The Cherry Orchard*, the 'correct' spatial relationship between Lopakin and Ranevskaya was vital for clear storytelling of their

scenes. Blocking choices led to major breakthrough moments during *Close Quarters*, analysed in Chapter 6.

2.10 THE PRODUCTION MEETS AN AUDIENCE

How might considering the nature of the audience impact on the types of discoveries made? Returning to Brook, the theatre at its most basic level concerns the watchers watching the watched: 'I can take any empty space and call it a bare stage. A man walks across this empty space whilst someone else is watching him, and this is all that is needed for an act of theatre to be engaged' (Brook, 2008, p.11).

A production's relationship with its audience must therefore be taken into consideration in relation to breakthrough moments. For director Peter Snow, many of the breakthroughs he had as a director discussed in his article *Ovid in the Torres Straight* (2006) were linked to an understanding of his target audience. Directing *Metamorphosis* for an indigenous community of Australian citizens with English as their second language, the style came as a result of creating the piece for them as 'it emerged quickly […] that we would play it as farce, Keystone Cops style […] If we were to play to different language groups […] we thought we should concentrate on physical action' (Snow, 2006, p.44). Therefore, an understanding of the audience demographic is important in informing the production frames discussed previously, which ensures a framework appropriate breakthroughs can be measured against. Prince discusses the need to create a frame and set of stylistic rules for the Broadway musical *Candide* (1974) through its previews, as judging the audience, he believed that it required a different opening number, to 'tell the audience who its main characters are and set the style' (Prince, 2017, p.189). Therefore, an 'aha' moment may be revealed in all the semiotic areas blending together to be communicated to an audience.

For McBurney, 'theatre is created in the minds of the audience. It's an imaginative act' (Innes and Shevtsova, 2009, p.166). Wasserberg continually

thought of her audience in relation to the discoveries being made in *Close Quarters* as discussed through Chapters 5 and 6. Rehearsal rooms, from personal experience, often resonate with director's phrases: 'This needs an audience', 'Don't forget to share this with the audience', 'Who is the audience to you?'. Carnicke references Stanislavski here:

> For a performance to be successful [Stanislavski] muses, the "spectators, just like the actors, must carry traces of their feelings in their memories" […] In other words, the audience too must activate their sixth sense. This notion corrects the widespread misconception in the US that Stanislavski taught actors to ignore the audience.
>
> (Carnicke, 2009, p.157)

Throughout *Close Quarters* rehearsals, Wasserberg continually thought about her audiences; wanting to construct and create images and moments that would unlock her audience's senses and imaginations, supporting Brook's premise, categorically 'stress[ing] that [a] director is inseparable from [the] actors and audience' (Brook, THM/452/8/75).

2.11 SUMMARY

With no one seminal text concerning breakthroughs in relation to theatre rehearsals, the literature review synthesises the fields of psychology, acting and directing practice and rehearsal studies in relation to the breakthrough moment. Actors and directors (as well as external researchers and observers) talk often about breakthrough moments, albeit by using different terminologies and definitions. As described, these may be designated as moments of 'discovery', 'aha', 'inspiration' or 'insight', amongst others. Yet this interchange of terminology is not helpful. In actor training and professional rehearsal rooms, consistency of language is important for a shared building of technique and approach to rehearsals. The literature indicates that breakthroughs occur, yet it is confusing to jump between terminologies. This thesis therefore (re)defines breakthroughs by creating

four categories through which we can view these moments: 'The Four Lenses of Breakthrough'.

Rehearsals should also be observed within their present social, cultural and historical contexts. The notion that there is a 'tendency to conflate modern and past theatrical practice' (Stern, 2000, p.3) in rehearsal studies is a warning to be wary of transposing prior previous rehearsal contexts onto contemporary theatre-making. The ethnographic study of *Close Quarters* therefore notes the correlations between themes that have emerged from the literature. Through reviewing the literature (alongside the observation of *Close Quarters*), this thesis presents a taxonomy of circumstances of what constitutes a breakthrough within its social and cultural frame, how it comes about and why, detailed in the analytical findings of Chapter 7 and the conclusions of Chapter 8.

The ethnographic observation of *Close Quarters* builds out of the literature review in terms of seeing from an insider-researcher's perspective many of these 'aha' moments in action. Through reviewing the literature, it is only possible to travel part of the way in the answering of the research questions and establishes a gap in existing literature. *A posteriori* experience allows for a deeper understanding of the breakthrough phenomena, and the literature reveals a gap in the knowledge. The methodological underpinning of this study is now the subject of Chapter 3.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH APPROACHES

> Am I merely an inert seated object, indistinguishable from the chair I am sitting on, impersonal and even invisible to others? Or have I unwittingly become, even for them, part of the rehearsal? Has the shared experience, in this confined space, of their emotions and the unavoidable exchange of glances which pass back and forth across the acting area like beams of light, brought my thoughts and feelings into the common current?
>
> (Selbourne, 2010, p.55)

3.0 INTRODUCTION

Since Selbourne's early outsider account of Peter Brook's 1969 production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, observers of rehearsals have occasionally highlighted dilemmas that have arisen from their methods. The above entry was taken from the second day during the second week of rehearsals. Writing in a pre-ethnographic rehearsal studies era (Selbourne's work was only published twelve years after the production), Selbourne grapples with the 'how' of observational methods throughout documenting rehearsals: 'if I creak my chair, or write in my notebook, or turn the pages of the text, will I disturb them?' (Selbourne, 2010, p.3). Interestingly, Brook believed an observer could destructively change the course of rehearsals:

> I had even begun to feel […] that my own facial expression and physical comportment, in turn, was now a part of the circumstances which confronted the actors and thus helped to determine […] their own responses in rehearsal. [Brook] agreed.
>
> (Selbourne, 2010, p.111)

Perhaps this fear is what drove playwright and director George Bernard Shaw in 1921 to state categorically that:

> No strangers should be present at a rehearsal […] rehearsals are absolutely and sacredly confidential. The publication of gossip about rehearsals […] is the blackest breach of stage etiquette.
>
> (Shaw, in West, 1958, p.159)

Yet, in order to understand, we need to be there, as 'you are never going to understand the rehearsal process unless you are actually there and watching' (McAuley, 2019, l.88). As Chapter 1 highlighted, rehearsal studies as a discipline is now taking root in Australian, European, and British academic practice. As an emerging field, much thinking is taking place terms of methodologies and methods for the understanding and capturing of theatre creation. These now explicitly answer some of Selbourne's (2010) questions of 'how' to conduct rehearsal observations, and are outlined throughout this chapter in relation to my methodological approach.

The research question of this thesis is:

How do breakthroughs shape and inform the ongoing theatre-making process and the final production?

Supported by the following subsidiary research questions:

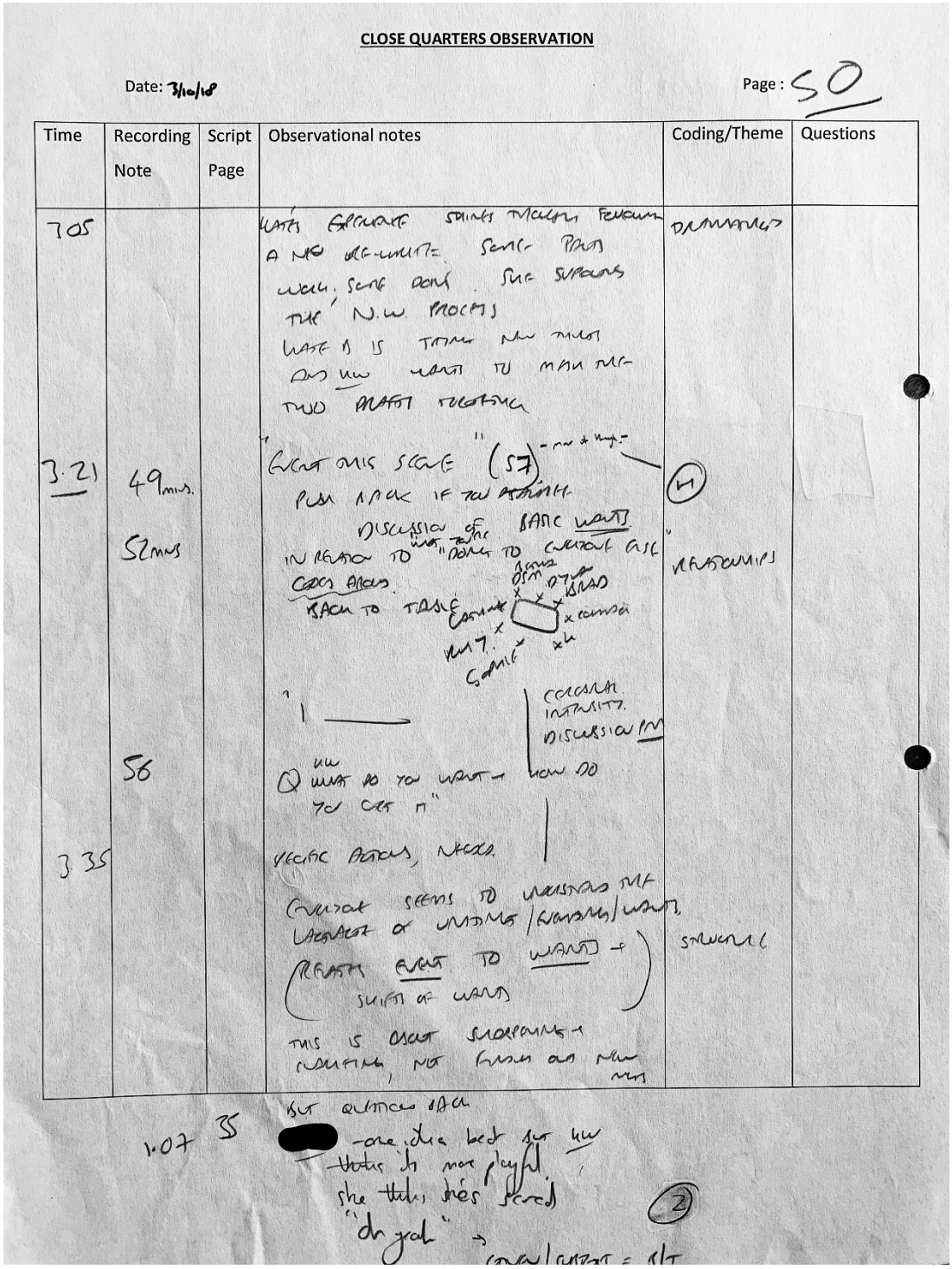
i) What counts as a breakthrough?
ii) When might breakthroughs occur in a rehearsal process?
iii) How, why and for whom might it be ascertained a breakthrough is meaningful?
iv) What levels of awareness of breakthrough moments might participants have, both during the rehearsal process and upon reflection?

In order for these questions to be answered, this chapter identifies the key research methodology employed, which is that of a qualitative ethnographic approach, building on from the introduction in Chapter 1. Chapter 2 argued that the literature can address the above questions up to a certain point, and whilst rehearsal observations are not new, formal capturing of rehearsal data

using an ethnographic approach remains in its infancy. Bogart suggests that we should 'celebrate the shoulders upon which [we] stand' (Bogart, 2001, p.14); I am not only standing on the shoulders of other ethnographic rehearsal scholars, but directly contributing to models of understanding rehearsal observation that other academics and practitioners may wish to use. This thesis is the first rehearsal ethnographic research study in relation to breakthrough moments specifically, and 'even when makers ourselves it is rare we get to learn first-hand in detail about other makers' methods [as] gaining access to the development and rehearsal process is simply impractical' (Harvie and Lavender, 2010, p.1). The impracticality of spending five weeks in a rehearsal room for other practitioners is problematic and so this thesis is a surrogate for those unable to commit to such a time period.

As an overview, the methods for the *Close Quarters* observation are:

1. **Background Preparation.** This included preparing the playtext by undertaking a textual analysis to thoroughly understand the piece being rehearsed, alongside research into the backgrounds and ethos of Out of Joint and key players (actors, writer, director and designer in particular);
2. **Pre-Rehearsal Interviews.** Director Kate Wasserberg and designer Max Jones were interviewed about their work, their rehearsal philosophies and methods, plus their ideas concerning *Close Quarters*;
3. **Observation**: An intense ethnographical direct observational period of the rehearsal of Out of Joint/Sheffield Crucible co-production of Kate Bowen's new play *Close Quarters* was the key data collection method. Daily field jottings were undertaken, supported by audio-recordings of key moments of rehearsal;
4. **Field Jottings to Field Notes:** The daily jottings were turned into field notes nightly following rehearsals. This also included cross-referencing data with other source materials including actor's scripts and annotations where possible, as well as wider reading. (Figure 2);



CLOSE QUARTERS OBSERVATION

Date: 3/10/18

Page : 50

Time	Recording Note	Script Page	Observational notes	Coding/Theme	Questions
7.05			WAYS EXPLORATORY SPACES TWEAKING FEEDBACK A NEW USE-QUALITY SENSE PLAYS WORK, SENSE DOING SHE SUPPORTS THE N.W. PROCESS WHAT IS IS TRYING NEW THINGS AND HOW WAYS TO MAIN TAIN TWO DIFFERENT FEELINGS	DRAWINGS	
3.21	49 mins.		GIVE THIS SCALE (57) - new & long - PUSH BACK IF YOU DISAGREE DISCUSSION OF BASIC WANTS IN REGARD TO "DOING TO CHANGE USE CORE AREAS REACH TO TABLE [sketch]	H	
	52 mins			RELATIONSHIPS	
	56		Q "UM WHAT DO YOU WANT — HOW DO YOU USE IT"	CONCEPTUAL INTIMITY. DISCUSSION IN	
3.35			SPECIFIC AREAS, NEEDS		
			CHARLOTTE SEEMS TO UNDERSTAND THE LANGUAGE OF UNDOING / REDOING / WANTS, (REALITY EASE TO WANTS + SHIFTS OF WANTS)	SENSUALITY	
			THIS IS ABOUT SHOPPING + CLOTHING, NOT FINISH OR NEW WAYS		
1.07	35		BUT QUESTIONS BACK [redacted] - one she best for UM - thinks it was playful she thinks she's scared "oh yeah" → (2)		

Figure 2: Page 50 of the Field Jottings; showing rough observational details of the what and the how, cross-referenced with audio recording details in column 2, and codes in column 5. 'H' indicates the 'how' of a moment, with '2' as a lens two moment (coded in the evening).

5. **Post-Rehearsal Interviews:** Follow up interviews with the actors and director were held. This data was used to validify the observations ensuring my observations correlated with their phenomenological experiences;
6. **Analysis:** Finally, analysis and writing up of the field notes into an ethnographic observational narrative which is presented in Chapters 5 and 6.

Sophie Proust states that rehearsal observations consist of two phases; one of these is the

> onstage phase (rehearsal notes or staging notes) [whereas] offstage relate(s) to meetings with the director before or after rehearsals, to electronic or telephone conversations, or to meetings concerned with production.
>
> (Proust, 2008, p.290)

This chapter identifies and critically justifies both the methodology and the specific methods above. Ethical considerations through using ethnography as a whole are also identified, as well as the ethical implications of using the individual methods. Finally, the chapter will give an overview of how a small pilot project helped to frame the study's methods undertaken during the major observation.

3.1 AN ETHNOGRAPHIC APPROACH: OVERVIEW

Observing in depth the rehearsal process for one production, rather than several as some ethnographers such as Crawford have done, is due to the fact that this study, as Danny Jorgensen would argue in relation to his thinking on ethnography, is not an 'experiment' (Jorgensen, 1990, p.24). If an experiment, the observation of several rehearsal periods would have posed a theoretical proposition which would then be confirmed. Observing

one in depth has allowed the thesis to construct a 'lot out of a little' (Silverman, 2013, p.141).

The definition of ethnography stems from the writing of people: '*ethnos* ("people" or "tribe") and *graphia* ("writing")' (Jones and Watt, 2010, p.13). The people observed in the writing of this thesis make up the company of *Close Quarters.* The one ethnographic 'sustained observation' (Charmaz, 2014, p.35) of this production sits under the umbrella heading of 'micro-ethnograph[y]' (LeCompte and Preissle, 1993, p.8) as one 'in depth case study [which] involve[s] the detailed description and analysis of an individual [rehearsal]' (Jorgensen 1990: 19). The solo case study allows for 'probabilistic sampling' (LeCompte and Preissle, 1993, p.78) in ethnography, which represents a rehearsal process, and then 'generalise[s] these findings to larger populations' (Jorgensen, 1990, p.24). This thesis cannot provide a complete universal truth about all rehearsal periods and breakthroughs, but presents a 'language of possibilities' (Silverman, 2013, p.219).

In the role of an outsider-researcher as an ethnographer, one commits to experiencing and interpreting through first-hand observation a 'particular social or cultural setting on the basis of (though not exclusively by) participant observation' (Atkinson *et al.*, 2001, p.4). 'Understanding' is an imperative core value of ethnography for social scientists such as Julie Jones and Sal Watt, who state that the ethnographer's aim is to create 'interpretive bridges or frameworks for understanding' (Jones and Watt, 2010, p.10) as opposed to merely describing what is happening. Figure 2 shows a circle with an 'H' marked, which is the 'how' of a moment, as opposed to describing what was happening.

Taking the notion that 'ethnographies are analytical descriptions […] of intact cultural scenes and groups' (LeCompte, 2003, p.2), observing actors and directors in their field is therefore the framework for understanding *how* rehearsal room discoveries come about. The ethnographer has to find a 'fresh and different way' (LeCompte and Preissle, 1993, p.3) into the research. This is supported by Jones and Watt who demolish any previous

claims that ethnography is merely descriptive and not interpretative. Rehearsal rooms are familiar to myself as a theatre director, yet through an ethnographic paradigm I was able to discover what was happening in the moment of a breakthrough, as well as what 'the actions mean' (Walsh *et al.*, in Hatch, 2007, p.43). This fresh lens ensured that I had a 'mission to put [myself] in a position that may yield useful data' (Palmer, 2010, p.141). Terence Crawford, an ethnographer of theatre in Australia, with 30 years' professional experience as actor, director and actor-trainer, states that he 'unapologetically acknowledged my social, professional and theoretical position [within theatre] as laden and ripe' (Crawford, 2015, p.217). As a director, I cannot underestimate my privileged position, as entering the *Close Quarters* rehearsal room as an ethnographer meant that I was able to acknowledge a familiar rehearsal culture immediately and begin observing analytically from the first day.

Responding to a contested ethnographic study, Steven Lubet's *Interrogating Ethnography* (2018) points to the dangers of not accurately or reliably verifying ethnographic studies, leaving researchers open to potential criticism and, ultimately, academic misconduct. His three recommendations are followed in this study. Firstly, that of accuracy, whereby any observations should come from 'specific incidents of observed behaviour' (Lubet, 2018, p.136). This research will not be using the sub-rehearsals as a data source due to practical impossibilities, but purely the rehearsal room observations. Whilst this may seem to be problematic as it does not reveal moments that occur outside of the bounded rehearsal observations, Lubet argues this to be a positive factor, as it is more controlled and less likely to be constructed by the participant to please the researcher. His second recommendation relates to candour. Lubet argues that 'clear distinctions must be made between direct observations and other sources' (Lubet, 2018, p.136) which are made explicit throughout. The final recommendation relates to documentation. This thesis does 'include […] the dates and nature of communication [and] dates and locations [are] stated accurately' (Lubet, 2018, p.136); later cross-checks may thus be made. This study's field

jottings (Figure 2) had time, date, notes and other details that can be fact-checked with Out of Joint, or via the Deputy Stage Manager's rehearsal calls and notes.

The plurality of the theatre company's cast contradicts the notion there can be any one meaning or one way of achieving a breakthrough moment. Many forces impact on the unpredictable nature of breakthrough moments which were explored in the previous chapter including text, process, genre, the actor's process, the actor's interactions, as well as the director's agenda and frames. Different backgrounds of actors, as well as this 'created culture' for a short rehearsal period will lead to 'intercultural diversity' (Fetterman, 1998, p.24), whereby there will be differences between subcultures. For example, different actors have different training backgrounds and terminologies for describing and undertaking their practice. There is no 'homogeneity amongst the participant[s]' (Ackroyd and O'Toole, 2010, p.40) as Out of Joint does not follow a repertory or ensemble model.

A cognisance of the paradox within ethnography is in the very aim of trying to 'record and communicate the transience and evanescence of human behaviour' (Ackroyd and O'Toole, 2010, p.77). As a director, I know that the interrelations between actors, directors, the text (and sometimes a playwright) within the rehearsal room create collaborative conditions for decisions to be reached within the frame of a production's concept, and are unpredictable. Only by observing inter-relations in an ethnographic sense can a deeper understanding of this be reached. Listening to what actors and directors said allowed me to ascertain whether there was a breakthrough, and *how* and *why* that breakthrough may have come about, as well as its meaningfulness for the individual and the overall process. The validity of this came through the cross-checking in relation to the post-rehearsal interviews and using cognitive theory models when examining these interrelations; this study has been able to 'describe what people think by listening to what they say' (Fetterman, 1998, p.6), which is not achievable using auto-ethnography or secondary source material research.

It was therefore appropriate to be an outsider-researcher as the study's primary aim was to not only examine the relationship between actor and actor, but also that of actor and director via both verbal and non-verbal communication (nvc). Considering auto-ethnography at an early stage in the research process, 'whereby the already constructed social self is examined' (Julien, 2014, p.175), and undertaking self-examination using my professional directing practice, was ruled out due to the difficulty of observing nvc between actor and director, and actor and actor.

> One of the primary methodological problems for artist-scholars working in practice-as-research is that they must wear at least two hats at all times. The researcher needs to 'get' something out of the research, some output, while also wearing the artistic hat that demands full presence in the artistic process.
>
> (Wilson, 2019, p.4)

Whilst a practice-as-research/auto-ethnographic framework may have been the easier route for this study, the efficacy of being an outside observer proved invaluable, as otherwise the observations detailed through Chapters 5 and 6 may not have been witnessed. Directorial confirmations needed to be witnessed, such as for director Mnouchkine, who states that there is a sudden moment where she

> sees what she wants [and] if the process is working [her actors] catch the rightness of the moment with her: all understand organically the direction of the performance as it is taking place.
>
> (Miller, 2007, p.48)

Ideally, this needed to be externally observed and analysed in order to ascertain the relationship between the actor and director, so as to answer the research question, particularly in the regard of for whom the breakthrough is meaningful.

3.1.2 ETHNOGRAPHY AND VALIDITY

Ethnographic research sits within the paradigm of phenomenology where a participant's subjective reality is seen to be 'no less real' (Fetterman, 2009, p.5) than supposed objective truths. Yet there remains a danger of not achieving a validity of what is observed. Validity to Steinar Kvale and Svend Brinkmann 'refers in ordinary language to the truth, the correctness and the strength of an argument [making it] sound, well grounded, justifiable, strong and convincing' (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009, p.246). This thesis therefore validates an analysis of a moment via personal opinions from directors and actors, from post-observational interviews, in order to contextualise their understanding of breakthrough moments, and to 'cross check the accuracy of data gathered in another way' (LeCompte and Preissle, 2003, p.48). For McAuley, a vital part of any observation is discussing the rehearsal room work with participants following a rehearsal.

Ascertaining whether what the researcher sees is what the participant is experiencing, this ensures that 'the interviewer plays the devil's advocate towards his or her own findings' (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009, p.249). McAuley starts from the position that there can be 'no such person as a neutral or transparent observer' (McAuley, 1998, p.80). Via the follow-up interviews, the researcher is not assuming any categorical truth as there is no 'final truth to the told' (McAuley, 1998, p.84), which is important in the pursuit of academic rigour. As Birks and Mills comment, 'procedures to ensure quality must not only be done, but must also be *seen* to be done' (Birks and Mills, 2015, p.39, original emphasis).

Asking the participants to reflect formally allows for a reframing of initial findings, which begin from my humble viewpoint of 'this is what I saw [as opposed to assuming] this is what happened' (McAuley, 1998, p.78). The interviews, coupled with the audio recordings, field notes, and jottings, ensure there is an audit trail to the research. This relates to Susan Cole's position that there is a potential difference between 'how a scene feels, to the actor, and how a scene looks, to the director' (Cole, 1992, p.14). Two

actors, Kathryn O'Reilly and Sophie Melville, as well as the director, allowed access to their scripts, notes, drawings and scribblings which gave further clues to possible moments of importance from the rehearsal work as 'words, notes and annotations serve […] a primarily instrumental function that helps to activate the artistic imagination, even beyond the constraints of the stage' (Cassiers, De Laet and van den Dries, 2019, p.37). What was thereby important for the actor was seen through any of their notes which activated their creativity.

Not consciously privileging subjective experiences was paramount. 'A cognitive ethnographer would ask members […] how they define their reality' (Fetterman, 1998, p.17), allowing the researcher to draw patterns and conclusions of whether a breakthrough is proved effective for the good of the production or solely for an individual's own progress, and whether this matters, depending on whom the breakthrough is for. This 'emic perspective' (LeCompte, 2001, p.44) is at the heart of this work, where the participant's view of reality is valid (as opposed to an etic, objective, external perspective). Does the director hold an *etic* perspective as an outsider to the actor making a discovery, or is the director part of the *emic* perspective also? As most ethnographers take into account the *emic* perspective, this research does not shy away from the subjective, emic perspectives of the actors and directors, ensuring validity.

Using LeCompte and Preissle's (1993) framework, ethnography is inductive, empirical, generative, constructive and subjective in its approach. Through a case study approach, the data is sought, and meaning is being generated through the analysis. Grounded Theory, linked to ethnography, was used as a parallel methodology to make sense of this data.

3.1.3 GROUNDED THEORY

Grounded Theory (GT), initially laid down by Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss in 1967, is an empirical social science research method and

one from which this thesis has drawn certain methods. Beginning with the concept that any theory is *grounded* in the data 'as opposed to testing existing theory' (Berks and Mills, 2011, p.2), there are many practical methods embedded in a Grounded Theory approach that can be used when viewed through an ethnographic lens on a qualitative research project. The use of Grounded Theory enables key patterns from the events leading to breakthrough moments to be studied, as it encompasses 'multiple truths' (Ackroyd and O'Toole, 2010, p.60). Using memoing and coding techniques, Grounded Theory takes raw data and aims to make sense of the phenomenon being studied by explaining the data as the process develops. This is as opposed to merely describing. Therefore, it is 'discovery of theory from data' (Glaser and Strauss, 1967, p.1) using a constructivist paradigm. This has been much documented by leading Grounded Theory practitioner Kathy Charmaz, who makes it clear that the approach arose from a need for qualitative approaches to be 'taken seriously' (Charmaz, 2014, p.6) by academics during the 1960s.

Grounded Theory states that the construction of a theory starts 'with the first piece of data' (Berks and Mills, 2011, p.114) that is collected. Collins warns against objectivism and moves towards constructivism which 'shreds notions of a neutral observer and value free expert' (Collins, 2014, p.13); being a theatre director, I was not able to be a purely neutral objective observer, hence the need for validity. There are no explicit systematic studies of rehearsal approaches from the breakthrough perspective and therefore the philosophy of Grounded Theory informs this study to enable the stages of the rehearsal period to move 'back and forth' (Charmaz, 2014, p.1) between data and analysis. This allowed for theory to emerge over the rehearsal observation period, as opposed to beginning with a theory to be proven, or waiting for all data to be collected prior to analysis. As stated, this research was never intended to be a scientific experiment, but aims to make sense of the messy, creative and unpredictable endeavours of rehearsal.

Charmaz and Mitchell made a solid case for the use of Grounded Theory within ethnography in 2001, stating that 'ethnographers can adopt and adapt grounded theory to increase the analytical incisiveness of their studies' (Charmaz and Mitchell, 2001, p.160), wanting to move towards analysis of findings as opposed to description, and to 'understand experience as their subjects live it, not simply talk about it' (Charmaz and Mitchell, 2001, p.161). The early ethnographic work of McAuley was descriptive in its final form, yet by using Grounded Theory, the ethnographer can interpret and analyse the data throughout as theories emerge. The observation became a quest; pursuing clues where one piece of data opened doors to allow analysis of another piece of data. Also, one observation led to a question in the follow-up interview, where there was an awareness of gaps in the data, or a necessity for the participant to expand, clarify or confirm their ideas. Through coding and categorising the data patterns, theories therefore evolve. In their pure form in Grounded Theory, codes are created line by line from transcripts and data. From the codes, categories (themes) occur as 'coding begins the analysis' (Charmaz and Mitchell, 2001, p.165). Porter recommends coding 'every three seconds' (Porter, 1975, p.16) in transcripts of recorded dialogue to ensure little is missed. For this study, coding in a strict Grounded Theory approach was not used.

In Grounded Theory, a storyline form is used when writing up the data. A narrative approach explains the theory as a 'means of organising [the ethnographers] description' (Porter, 1975, p.169). Through the qualitative narrative the ethnographer is therefore 'visible in the text' (Murphy and Dingwall, 2001, p.345) and it is common that 'ethnography employs storytelling as a mechanism to convey research findings' (Birks and Mills, 2015, p.113). Chapters 5 and 6 employ this strategy. However, by using a narrative style it is incumbent on the researcher to ensure that a personal voice and opinion should not power, nor be imposed upon, the narrative, such as Selbourne's, as identified earlier. According to Duncan Light, writing up ethnographic observations should evoke the spirit of the observations as well as analysing. Realising there is no 'single, correct, true

way to write up ethnographic research' (Light, 2010, p.175), a narrative approach as used across Chapters 5 and 6 in particular has been able to evoke the spirit of the rehearsal room, ensuring that an ethnographic 'story can deliver messages that are far more compelling than surveys or empirical studies' (Lubet, 2018, p.135).

This approach therefore does allow for an emic subjectivity, where its originators Glaser and Strauss 'invited their readers to use Grounded Theory strategies flexibly in their own way' (Charmaz, 2014, p.16). This reduced any preoccupation with slavishly following this method explicitly for this thesis.

3.1.4 STANDING ON SOME ETHNOGRAPHIC SHOULDERS

McAuley, from the late 1970s, began her pioneering observational analysis of rehearsals and since 1985, has used ethnographic practice in rehearsal observations. Acknowledging that rehearsal studies as an academic discipline is an 'emerging field' (McAuley, 2008, p.276) whilst at the same time noting that there has been 'a century of scholarly concern with theatrical performance' (McAuley, 2012, p.3), McAuley led the way in mapping ethnographic practices with observational studies of rehearsals. Kate Rossmanith (2011) and, more recently, Terence Crawford (2015) have successfully built on this work.

Rossmanith is part of an established network of rehearsal studies practitioners in Australia and lays out a potential approach to the observation and notation of rehearsals in her 2009 paper *Making Theatre Making*, where she introduces the principle of contextualising the company, actors and their training and the play. According to Rossmanith, observers should have 'conducted preliminary research about the theatre group in question, the play text (if there is one), and perhaps even the training institutions where the practitioners studied' (Rossmanith, 2009, p.22). This is furthered into the external factors contributing to the potential atmosphere and working

conditions of the rehearsal space as discussed in 4.7, and alluded to in Rossmanith's questions:

> Where are we? What area are we in? What kind of building are we in? What does the room look, taste, feel, and smell like? Is it hot, cold, muggy, and windy? How is the space laid out?
>
> (Rossmanith, 2009, p.22)

Rossmanith details that from her rehearsal observations the most 'inspired performances […] were not always centred on an individual, but in fact were mostly couched as shared moments when everyone felt collectively "right"' (Rossmanith, 2003, p.202). In *Creating a Role*, Stanislavski continues to push for the actor's personal discoveries being related to the right balance of psychological and physical nuances.

Drawings and sketches form part of French rehearsal ethnographer Sophie Proust's rehearsal observations, where 'a small sketch or drawing is worth a thousand words in suggesting a player's posture, be it initial or modified' (Proust, 2008, p.294). Therefore, rehearsal ethnographers are examining the methods of data capture that work for them. Rossmanith also follows up with 'interviews [which] bear on the rehearsal process' (Rossmanith, 2003, p.6). The tacit fluidity allowed with Grounded Theory maps onto the case study approach from research room observations, supported by actor and director interviews. Coding is also important in Rossmanith's work (1999), from her field jottings. Whilst not explicitly referring to Grounded Theory, she moves from open to focused coding on a line-by-line basis from which 'ideas swell' (Rossmanith, 1999, p.31).

One important element of Rossmanith's work is that of distancing: what the observer believes to be interesting should be separated from what the actors and directors believe to be interesting. This is vital as what I may believe to be breakthrough, may not be from the actor's perspective, and 'if not, why not?' (Rossmanith, 1999, p.26). As discussed above, the challenge

of this study has been to keep a critical distance and aim not to impose my own beliefs as a practitioner onto a participant's situation.

Finally, whilst not discussing Grounded Theory explicitly, McAuley states too that a rehearsal ethnographer 'won't know what the thesis is until after the observations' (McAuley, 2015, l.30), supporting Charmaz's statement that 'some of our best ideas may occur to us late in the process and may lure us back to the field to gain an arresting view' (2014: p.18). Not until the data was gathered did theories and conclusions emerge.

3.2 PRIOR TO THE OBSERVATION

Context was required in terms of the backgrounds of individuals within the company, in order to understand any shared philosophies of their approaches to theatre-making, as well as the artistic mission of Out of Joint as a theatre company. Therefore, a pre-rehearsal interview with Wasserberg, the director of the piece, plus analysis of any pre-rehearsal notebooks and script annotations was essential, as directorial ideas provide the frame and core action from which all other artists work within, as argued in Chapter 2. Wasserberg's notebooks in particular show that

> written evidence of an extended process of thinking, researching and creating […] Whether or not it exists as a physical object, the director's book exemplifies an approach to theatre production.
>
> (Shepherd, 2012, p.39)

As breakthroughs are related to the frame of the production's world, I needed to understand the frame within which the actors were to be operating, and the interview allowed for an understanding of Wasserberg's production concept.

3.3 ETHNOGRAPHIC METHODS

Stating that rehearsals are essentially composed of 'verbal activities' (McAuley, 1998, p.75), McAuley argues that any methods used ensure that anecdotes, questioning and discussions all are captured, which was achieved through written field jottings (Figure 2) and unobtrusive audio recordings. The observational stage required me to play the part of a 'snoop, shadow or historian' (McAuley, 1998, p.93) from the side-lines of the rehearsal room, taking field jottings leading up to, including, and following breakthroughs. Such scribbling and thinking 'always involves observation and recording' (Silverman, 2013, p.213). Rossmanith describes how she captures her observations in rehearsals, which informed my approach:

> I divide my notes into "field jottings", and "field notes". Jottings involve the scrawled notes I take on-the-fly while watching rehearsals, always with the time written next to them, with bits of dialogue, with mini-sketches of the space, blocking, and with my own half-formed questions and thoughts […] You are painstakingly gathering piles of details and thoughts before building an analysis […] The jottings are bald and rough.
>
> (Rossmanith, 1999, p.24)

Fieldnotes are 'less invasive' (Cole, 1992, p.3) than other forms of data collection and it is useful to consider Atkinson's ideas that, for ethnographers, their fieldnotes become a living, working document. Far from becoming a 'closed, completed, final text [they are] subject to reading, rereading, coding, recording, interpreting, reinterpreting' (Atkinson *et al.* 2001, p.3). This is echoed by Robert Emerson, arguing that fieldnotes are,

> selective […] descriptive […] minimiz[ing] explicit theorising and interpretation […] on a day to day basis, without any unsustained logic […] with little or no overall coherence or consistency.
>
> (Emerson *et al.*, 2001, p.353)

This messy approach sets aside field jottings from their eventual analysis on the writing up of field notes and cross-checking discussions and transcribing key moments from the audio recordings. Lubet stresses the importance of field jottings as often the 'only existing evidence that certain events occurred as reported' (Lubet, 2018, p.132) yet warns such jottings should not be 'held in secrecy […] or destroyed' (Lubet, 2018, p.134). Aiming to make sure that ethnography is strengthened as a quantitative research methodology, Lubet is ensuring that field jottings become a verification tool if required, protecting the researcher from claims of untruths.

Ethnographers such as Duncan Light (2010) identify jottings as 'notes', however. Rossmanith continues the tradition of interchanging terminology as there are 'disagreements over what constitutes fieldnotes' (Emerson *et al.*, 2001, p.354), suggesting a balance of short notes in the session, expanded notes following the session, plus journals for problems, ideas and initial analysis, which formed my method of working. Clive Palmer (2010) separates observational notes, from theoretical notes and methodological notes. Observational notes for Palmer are descriptive and without interpretation: 'the who, what, when, where and how of human activity' (Palmer, 2010, p.148). A theoretical note is when there is meaning being made from the observational notes and a methodological note is an 'instruction to oneself, a reminder and a critique of one's own practice' (Palmer, 2010, p.149).

During the observation it would have been easy to overlook ordinary and simple moments (a shift in body language or a facial expression) that were signifiers to a breakthrough moment occurring. In these moments observation 'allows for a study of rehearsal as it occurs in lived bodies' (Rossmanith, 2009, p.10). Major, seismic events could easily be seen to be benchmarks in labelling a breakthrough moment, yet ethnographic observation asks the researcher to place the mundane moment on a level playing field with the 'unusual' (LeCompte and Preissle, 1993, p.115). Therefore, needing to 'impose a strangeness' (Rossmanith, 2003, p.216) as a

'semi-insider' (Rossmanith, 2013, p.217) on the rehearsal processes through recording anecdotes, observations, and what actors and directors define as interesting, a discovery or problematic, helps to make 'links between events' (Charmaz, 2014, p.41). Porter reduces the fear for an ethnographer of making sense of absolutely everything, arguing that

> we can never, of course, know everything that is going on, but by keeping track of selected events, we are drawn toward a better understanding of the moment to moment relationship between an act of the director and the corresponding reaction of the actor.
>
> (Porter, 1975, p.28)

Nevertheless, Porter privileges the directorial viewpoint as the main catalyst driving the rehearsal room process, as opposed to a genuine give-and-take interaction between actor and director. Following Jorgensen's approach of noting 'what happened, why, involving whom, where and any analytic comments' (Jorgensen, 1990, p.97) – as opposed to foregrounding a directorial involvement, such as Selbourne – whoever was driving a section of rehearsals was noted, whether director, actor or designer.

Finally, if McAuley argues 'virtually nothing can be bracketed out as irrelevant' (McAuley, 2012, p.10), the issue of what to note down was paramount. Asking 'what is happening here?' (Charmaz and Mitchell, 2001, p.164) alongside the question of 'how are [the moments being] produced' (Holstein and Gubrium, in Silverman, 2013, p.107) enabled a relevance to be attached to a moment. Having 'The Four Lenses of Breakthrough' through which rehearsals were observed was vital, otherwise there would be a danger of being in rehearsals and 'seeing data everywhere and nowhere, gathering everything and nothing' (Charmaz and Mitchell, 2001, p.161), since for McAuley 'there is no such thing as an innocent gesture' (McAuley, 2012, p.200). To aid later clarity, a Dictaphone was used to record sections of rehearsal discussions to be transcribed. Unable to capture every nuance of dialogue handwritten at speed, this became a valuable tool to ensure

accurate transcribing of speech and listening again to the vocal tone between the key players.

3.3.1 FOLLOWING REHEARSALS

During the *Close Quarters* observation, I wrote up my field jottings into field notes at the end of each rehearsal day. Reminding myself that a researcher should,

> not wait too long […] as after more than a day or two you will forget the details of most observational experiences. […] Transport yourself mentally […] and imaginatively reconstruct events.
>
> (Jorgensen, 1990, p.99)

Each day, jottings were turned into field notes, which alluded to wider theoretical and methodological considerations. These notes 'are extended descriptions, notes that not only clarify and tease out "what happened", but could form useful examples in a future analysis' (Rossmanith, 1999, p.24). The pilot observation (discussed in 3.3.4) tested the efficacy of a narrative write-up of field jottings into field notes that enabled synthesis through triangulation of ideas from the rehearsal room, with that of the pre-rehearsal interviews alongside notebooks, notations in scripts by actors, and wider secondary source material. For this reason, the thesis draws upon the field notes and directly quotes from these to support an argument, as well as continuing to communicate the immediacy of the observed experience.

3.3.2 TO VIDEO, OR NOT TO VIDEO?

Kaye Haw and Mark Hadfield argue for video persuasively in their text *Video in Social Science Research* (2011) whereby the use of video allows for the researcher to begin to know and understand what they see, even though video is 'technically simple [but] methodologically complex' (Haw and Hadfield, 2011, p.141). Their conclusion is that, as the ethnographer is

observing, it is not necessarily proof of a moment's authenticity without re-running the moment and arriving at an understanding via the extraction of 'rich data' (Haw and Hadfield, 2011, p.26) such as non-verbal interactions. Sarah Pink argues that using video avoids '"losing" important visual data and cues' (Pink, 2013, p.87). Video is seen as important due to the fact that 'even the most perceptive observers can miss details' (Walsh *et al.*, in Hatch, 2007, p.45) and can help in revisiting moments. Yet, the main problem is that of an 'exaggerated sense of confidence' (Hatch, 2007, p.47) as there is an illusion that because it has been captured on video, the researcher has equally captured everything that has happened.

Despite some persuasive arguments, this study did not employ the use of video. Pragmatically, the sheer amount of data produced over a four-week period would have been 'costly, cumbersome and time consuming' (Pink, 2013, p.111). There is not one process for categorising or analysing film, and accrued written notes from an eight-hour day, plus video notes from the same period, would have been problematic to write up daily, as 'an hour of material could take at least three to five hours [to transcribe]' (Heath, Hindmarsh and Luff, 2010, p.32), and in analysis 'it can be well worth spending […] half an hour or even longer on a fragment lasting no longer than five seconds or so' (Heath, Hindmarsh and Luff, 2010, p.156). Whilst it would have been a welcome luxury to re-examine 'gaze, gesture, facial expression, or bodily comportment […] also allow[ing] data to be shared with colleagues and peers in different ways' (Heath, Hindmarsh and Luff, 2010, p.7), it would have been an impossible task to record five weeks intensively. Unobtrusively recording certain verbal data from a small Dictaphone was a decision taken pragmatically, as opposed to the starting and stopping of a video recorder, whilst deciding 'what to record and what not […] when to turn it on and off' (Walsh et al., in Hatch, 2007, p.48). Moreover, setting up and 'organising sound equipment' (Pink, 2013, p.89) would have been potentially 'highly obtrusive' (Jorgensen, 1990, p.103), especially moving around rehearsal rooms and locations.

The private world of rehearsal may jar with the use of video, as noted by Féral's caveat that video may be a 'presence [that] is not always welcome, and certain practitioners do not permit [it] as they feel it inhibits their creativity' (Féral, 2008, p.227). Susan Cole expresses this in her accounts of rehearsals also:

> To observe directors and actors in rehearsal is clearly a delicate undertaking: it can be perceived as an intrusion upon, even a repression of the conditions necessary to rehearsal […]. But there is no other way to document the collective creation of rehearsal except to be present.
>
> (Cole, 1992, p.3)

Finally, on ethical grounds Sarah Pink argues, 'even if consent is given [to video] it is not *informed* consent [as] the researcher is […] keeping his or her real agenda hidden from the informants' (Pink, 2013, p.40). Given the fluid nature of the rehearsal room (visitors, marketing departments, administrators, guest artists such as choreographers, vocal coaches, etc.) informed and meaningful consent is needed each time someone arrives; it becomes problematic 'to gain written permission from all participants' (Heath, Hindmarsh and Luff, 2010, p.18), which would not have been possible in this context and it was pre-agreed with Out of Joint that the focus would be on the director, actors, dramaturg, designer and fight directors.

3.3.3 POST-REHEARSAL INTERVIEWS

Interviews with the key actors and director following *Close Quarters* observations contextualised what was possibly being observed as happening with their opinions reflecting on action, with the participants thoughts being the most 'legitimate' (Porter, 1975, p.161). The interviews focused on the moments of key breakthroughs and factored in 'enough time and openness […] for the interviewees to explore purposefully' (Heyl, 2001, p.369) through

the interviews following the end of the rehearsal period, rather than interviews on coffee breaks, which were not possible due to the trade union Equity's working-time laws. This allowed time to have a genuine dialogue over an extended period of time.

Using semi-structured interviews allowed participants to become 'co-researchers' (Atkinson *et al.*, 2001, p.5) in the research as they reflected on their own process. Each interview therefore became 'an active text, a site where meaning is created and performed' (Denzin, 2001, p.25), and interviews were then woven into the narrative of Chapters 5 and 6. In relation to the rehearsal observations, this echoes the 'attempt to make sense of the way that practitioners made sense of the work in which they were engaged' (Rossmanith, 2009, p.7). Using Barbara Heyl's reminder that the origin of the word 'conversation' lies in the Latin phrase for wandering 'together with' (Heyl, 2001, p.371), this allowed for unexpected events and discoveries to take place in the conversations, and that rapport allowed the dialogue to *wander* during the reflections. Unofficial auto-ethnography from the participants took place and the study was able to combine 'ethnographic observations of numerous incidents with subsequent informal conversations with those present [which became] a powerful data collection strategy' (Charmaz, 2014, p.23).

Steinar Kvale and Svend Brinkman discuss this in their text *Interviews* (2009) where they posit that interviewers are either 'miners' or 'travellers'. If travelling, the interviewer and interviewee are genuinely wandering 'exploring the many domains' (Kvale and Brinkman, 2009, p.48) as opposed to mining, where the knowledge is already there and the interviewer is unearthing. The conversations undertaken in this research saw meaning created when wandering together through the semi-structured interviews where 'knowledge is produced […] in the interaction of interviewer and interviewee' (2009: 54), allowing the following of 'leads that emerge[d]' (Charmaz, 2014, p.25), like a detective investigating a crime.

The semi-structured interview method described by Charmaz (2014) is the intensive interviewing stage, conducted through the use of open-ended questions and follow up discussions where the interviewer encourages, listens and ultimately learns. Charmaz's warning to the researcher however is clear: be careful not to pursue your ideas over those of the participants and 'balance [their] story with [your] analysis' (Charmaz, 2014, p.86). The interviews revealed what discoveries were happening in the sub-rehearsal, going someway to overcoming McAuley's issue of how to capture vital moments that occur outside of the rehearsal environment.

3.3.4 A PILOT PROJECT AND ITS SHAPING OF THE METHODS

Prior to observing *Close Quarters*, a pilot ethnographic project was undertaken, observing my colleague Paul Christie at Staffordshire University direct Lee Hall's *The Good Hope* with Level 5 undergraduate drama students during November 2017. Feeling assured of the overall principles of ethnographic processes, the pilot project allowed for the methods eventually used to be tested, shaped and refined and had an 'impact on future [observations]' (LeCompte and Preissle, 1993, p.39). Using a Grounded Theory philosophy allowed the testing of the efficacy of the methods. In particular, it helped to create a shorthand and key for the rehearsal room jottings; this became:

- W: The 'what' of a moment;
- H: The 'how' of a moment;
- RS: Audio recording starts;
- RST: Audio recording stops;
- C *x* and *y*: Conversation between *x* and *y*.

During the first day of the pilot, field jottings were made on how the actual moment of breakthrough came about, but frustratingly not always how it manifested itself in a scene at a later date, and therefore its meaningfulness. This meant that there was a lack of data for overall analysis

and the trigger for the breakthrough. On the second observational day, and by the *Close Quarters* observation, capturing *how* this discovery was embodied in action became explicit, and as scenes were re-run and re-worked through, asking the question 'what is happening here?' (Charmaz and Mitchell, 2001, p.164) allowed for an examination of the *how* of the moment.

Learning not to start analysing too deeply in the moment became paramount, as losing momentum of observing the 'here and now and nothing else' (Merlin, 2001, p.173) became apparent, since analysing and aiming to understand took precedence over the simple act of collecting data effectively. As ensemble theatre practitioner John Britton states it was important to:

> First experience
>
> Then Recall.
>
> Then Reflect.
>
> Finally seek to understand.
>
> (Britton, 2013, p.318)

3.4 INTERVIEWS WITH OTHER PRACTITIONERS

Alongside the observation and rehearsal interviews were semi-structured interviews undertaken with leading actor trainers, such as Rea, and practitioners van Hove, Mitchell, and Harvey. These allowed for expansion on the observations and theories by contextualising from outside of the ethnographic study, generating perspectives and viewpoints on the data. These interview findings have been woven into the fabric of the rehearsal analysis from Chapter 5 onwards, allowing for the one single micro-ethnography case study to be positioned in relation to secondary source research and current practitioner's opinions.

These interviews therefore allowed for 'complexities [and] contradictions' (Heyl, 2001, p.375) to be highlighted and unpicked, ensuring that the rehearsal observation data is triangulated within a wider context.

3.5 APPROACHES TO ANALYSING THE DATA

If an 'ethnographer [is a] storyteller' (Grills, 1998, p.14), a narrative account in the reporting of the data can be used to present more creatively (whilst remaining analytical) and enabling the communication of a sense of rehearsal room energies, spirit, and dynamism through the data presentation.

As field jottings were worked daily into field notes, a data-reduction process was naturally occurring. This has been defined as the process when a researcher is 'selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting, and transforming the data that appears in written up field notes and transcriptions' (Miles, Huberman and Saldana, 2014, p.10). Prior to the analysis, selection became important as the data-reduction process concentrated on foregrounding breakthrough moments, as opposed to the whole rehearsal process being transcribed and narrated.

From here, coding of the notes, as well as the pre- and post-rehearsal interviews found common themes, and theories began to form using certain Grounded Theory methods (as opposed to its methodology). Coding 'is analysis' (Miles, Huberman and Saldana, 2014, p.72), as evidence emerges of 'the same pattern' (Miles, Huberman and Saldana, 2014, p.277). The coding of the 'what' and 'how' of rehearsal room breakthroughs began the analysis that created the subheadings to discuss and analyse the rehearsal practice. The interviews formed a major part of the validity of the study as being able to go 'beyond what is directly said' (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009, p.207) is vital to generate understanding.

3.5.1 CONSIDERATION OF 'THICK DESCRIPTION' IN ANALYSIS

Clifford Geertz's (1993) notion of 'thick description' in the field of anthropology has informed the depth of description needed in the analysis of data. Geertz wished to reveal meaning from analysing the language and actions of a group of people. Essentially, this thesis is a study and analysis of a series of interactions between actors and actor/director, and Geertz wished for interactions observed to be understood in relation to the situation. The 'thickness' Geertz alludes to is reworked from Gilbert Ryle's example of the stark difference between a wink and a twitch (similar, yet so different: one is intentional and one is involuntary) and the profound shift in meaning understood by this in relation to the context of the situation, which moves between 'a speck of behaviour, a fleck of culture, and – voilà! – a gesture' (Geertz, 1993, p.6). Geertz asserts that 'the difference, however, unphotographable, between a twitch and a wink is vast; as anyone unfortunate enough to have had the first taken for the second knows' (Geertz, 1993, p.6). Without context, a description of the wink could become 'thin'. Researchers must therefore 'aim for as broad a contextualisation as possible [with a] dense and elaborate (and ideally exhaustive) commentary on those findings' (Light, 2010, p.177) whereby, through describing and interpreting events, an 'explanation is arrived at' (Thompson, 2001, p.67). Using a case study approach, this thesis aims to 'draw large conclusions from small, but very densely textured facts' (Geertz, in Julien, 2014, p.174). Geertz frames the meaning that accrues from observation from the culture that it is situated within, and notes that 'culture is public because meaning is' (Geertz, 2003, p.12). The culture of a particular rehearsal room is public to the ethnographic observer, even if it is not within their own cultural reference. My role has been to differentiate between the actor-and-director equivalents of winking and twitching, whilst at the same time ensuring that I did not make any potential thin descriptions 'thick' with my own judgements and pre-conceived notions of rehearsal room practice, just as Rossmanith wished to capture the 'thickness of rehearsals' (Rossmanith, 2003, p.4) and the 'day to day micropractices' (Rossmanith, 2003, p.5) of the process.

The thickness of the descriptions underpins the narrative description of Chapters 5 and 6 in the spirit of Miles and Huberman, who discuss the notion of descriptive and analytical event write-ups, which create 'vignettes, […] evocative poetic renderings [with] rich pockets of meaningful data' (Miles and Huberman, 2014, p.182), stressing that the narrative must have a balance of 'descriptive detail, analytic commentary, critical or evaluative perspectives' (Miles and Huberman, 2014, p.183).

3.6 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS IN USING ETHNOGRAPHY

Prior to Sarah Pink's call in 2013 for 'ethical ethnography' (Pink, 2013, p.39), Robert Murphy and Elizabeth Dingwall laid groundwork for the ethical implications of using ethnography, as there was, at the time, a 'lack of consensus about methodology […] [which was] reflected in discussions about its ethics' (Murphy and Dingwall, 2001, p.339). The final ethical 'justification for [any] research lies at least partly in the belief that it "will make a difference"' (Murphy and Dingwall, 2001, p.347). Therefore, underpinning all ethical considerations on a research project, the 'benefits must outweigh […] potential harm' (Murphy and Dingwall, 2001, p.340). *Close Quarters* observation is not a covert study as 'such [covert] objectivity can never actually be achieved [anyway]' (Pink, 2013, p.40). Making the object of the study overt was essential, as covert operations are impossible in theatre: everyone knows who is in the room, for what purpose, and their roles and responsibilities. Similarly, with the rise in social media and the internet to promote productions and rehearsals, a covert study is now pragmatically unachievable. I ensured that the participants knew that I was undertaking an ethnographic rehearsal room study, but I did not go into the specifics of 'aha' moments, as 'thoughtless researchers sometimes present their main research question directly to the respondents themselves' (Silverman, 2013, p.206), thus tacitly leading the participants towards an answer that they believe the researcher may wish to hear or witness. Participants may then have felt the need to invent breakthroughs or adapt

their behaviour during rehearsals. Withholding the specificity of the observation intent was therefore done so as not to 'compromise the fieldwork' (Murphy and Dingwall, 2001, p.343) with a potential concern that actors and directors may directly or indirectly be looking to make a discovery, or projecting onto a moment that it was a discovery in order to support the thesis and its work. As a professional theatre director of over twenty years' experience, anonymity would have been impossible. As a director, overt research opened up possibilities for deeper understanding, not only in relation to the rehearsal room observations, but to open conversations with the actors and the director. With a level of standing within the profession, this allowed for deep conversations and reflections to take place, explicitly and with ease discussing the nature of observing breakthroughs; using the language of acting allowed for fluid conversation in the verification process.

A rehearsal room may be seen as a 'sacred space' (McNiff, 2004, p.20) where discoveries are made within safety and the atmosphere must be conducive for actors to enter into a state of 'willing vulnerability' (Merlin, 2013, p.24). Therefore, lessening the mystery surrounding the research was paramount. On the first day at the 'meet-and-greet' (24 September 2018) I was asked by the director to introduce my role to the company along with everybody else. Another consideration undertaking this type of research is that the directors or the actors may not support research into acting, even if they do not explicitly state this. There is often a fear of the 'outsider' in rehearsals, even described as a 'taboo' (Baker-White, 1999, p.12). Therefore, a key agent (Wasserberg, whom I have known since 1994) was paramount in the pursuit of a gaining access to the rehearsal room and to bridge this gap. As Ginters states,

> it is an ongoing challenge, as rehearsal and performance study theorists, to gain access to the "hidden world" – to establish our legitimacy, our lack of threat, certainly our "unconditional positive regard" towards these artists and their work.

(Ginters, 2006, p.56)

Jorgensen (1990) expresses this as several polarities of visible/invisible and the open/closed settings. For example, rehearsal rooms are often invisible and closed, as 'a setting is visible when information about it is available to a general public' (Jorgensen, 1990, p.42); through professional connections with the Artistic Director of Out of Joint, this research has been able to

> have the kind of privileged access to […] provide the most illuminating and engaging detail and savour, allowing for understanding and analysis of the company's work but also, simply, a sense of it.
>
> (Harvie and Lavender, 2010, p.5)

Ethical permission was granted by Wolverhampton University's Ethical Committee, which approved the ethnographic practices undertaken including rehearsal observation and interview techniques. Appendix C documents the approval of this study's ethical declaration which is the subject of the next subchapter.

3.6.1 ETHICS AND THE ROLE OF THE RESEARCHER

The ethnographer's voice cannot be ignored if they are a 'storyteller' (Grills, 1998, p.14). Embodied knowledge gained from practice as a professional theatre director and university lecturer is thereby acknowledged and, as David Fetterman suggests, the ethnographer begins with 'biases and preconceived notions' (Fetterman, 1998, p.2). Similarly, David Silverman in *Doing Qualitative Research* states that,

> to suppose that *any* researcher enters a field without past experience or some pre-existing ideas is unrealistic […] I accepted that my presence in the field would influence what I saw, but I could not predict "how" or to what extent.
>
> (Silverman, 2013, p.29)

It was therefore important not be overwhelmed by any prior knowledge and understanding of professional rehearsal processes, and ensure that viewing through 'The Four Lenses of Breakthrough' was a search not for *what* was happening, but *how* it was happening. Silverman's advice (2013) of observing not what is happening but *how* something is happening became the driver to ensuring a form of objectivity in the observations.

Thus, my personal challenge was to divorce prior knowledge and experience from the start of this work, lest my position 'drift into the frame' (Ackroyd and O'Toole, 2010, p.44), since the researcher can 'put words into the mouths of participants and present […] a view more congruent with the researcher's status position' (LeCompte and Preissle, 1993, p.45). This thinking ensured that the analysis was able to 'separate out […] the data from [personal] interpretation' (Murphy and Dingwall, 2001, p.345) through the use of interviews for validity. Nevertheless, knowledge of the processes of creating theatre as a practitioner was useful, minimising the danger that 'we do not necessarily understand a phenomenon just because we have experienced it' (Murphy and Dingwall, p.345). McAuley falls short at times of fully understanding the production-making process, leading to ethnographic observations that are not always contextualised. 'I was never entirely clear about the protocols that applied to the designer's work' (McAuley, 2012, p.111) she writes honestly, exposing a puzzlement as to whether it was the designer or stage manager's decision to find an umbrella for a particular scene. McAuley becomes absorbed in this detail, whereas I would not personally have foregrounded this as a director, since it concerns the designer. In relation to myself as an observer, 'it is very hard to ignore the position of the observer as well as the issues around truth and accuracy […] because truth can be local, relative, historically based, situational and contextual' (Charmaz, in Puddephatt, 2006, p.9).

Finally, an awareness during the *Close Quarters* observation of the familiarity of a rehearsal room environment and its terminology and cultures, juxtaposed with the strangeness of my role within the rehearsal room not as

director, but as a researcher, was paramount. On week one, day two, Wasserberg asked me to join the table and contribute:

> A tricky situation occurred as Wasserberg kindly said for me to join them at the table, not to be on the outside of the action and to "contribute if you wish". I took the "if you wish" part literally. I didn't input; I could have. But to do so would have made me an actor in the piece rather than an observer gathering data.
>
> (Field Notes, 2018, l.182)

Sigmund Freud's notion of the uncanny (1919) relates to the strangeness I was feeling in this moment, where the familiar and homely (German: *heimlich*) becomes a ghostly opposite (*unheimlich*) where 'one does not know where one is' (Freud, 1919, p.2). Not knowing where to place myself in that moment was palpable: tension was created as the impulse as a director to contribute, and the need to be an objective outsider as a researcher, oscillated with one another. Having worked through this momentary inner struggle, the uncanny feeling did pass, and committing to the research objective rather than as a director was privileged. Objectivity is interrogated by Charmaz as she argues that the researcher's perspective should be taken into account as a bias, and that 'you should be able to analyse your own perspectives and feelings as just another piece of data that emerges' (Charmaz, in Puddephatt, 2006, p.10), and that 'no study is […] totally objectivist' (Charmaz, in Puddephatt, 2006, p.12); if one views the data as such, it becomes problematic, because 'different observers will hear different things' (Charmaz, in Puddephatt, 2006, p.9). It was imperative to return to rehearsals with as much of a 'blank slate' (Puddephatt, 2006, p.15) as possible, after this early inner struggle.

3.6.2 ANONYMITY AND CONSENT

First names are often used in the ethnographic rehearsal room studies of McAuley with details of the cast lists published also, yet Light states that

'it goes without saying that you should never write anything that can reveal the identity of the people being researched' (Light, 2010, p.179). This contradicts Norrthon who states, 'anonymising (future) public activity is in many ways difficult' (Norrthon, 2019, p.173). This conflict of approaches needed clarity, due to the embryonic nature of the rehearsal studies field, which has not arrived at a mutual consensus. Rossmanith in her pioneering rehearsal work 'hoped to avoid what Geertz refers to as 'ethnographic ventriloquism' (Desjarlais, 1992, p.31) where researchers collapse all voices into one anonymous mass,

> blindly "doing" the natives in different voices […]. Using actual names also has the effect of foregrounding those practitioners other than the directors; the actors and the crew […] are not reduced to nameless bodies.
>
> (Rossmanith, 2003, p.9)

Anonymity has not been applied for the purpose of this thesis as it is not possible to keep the 'data confidential' (Murphy and Dingwall, 2001, p.341). Due to the overt nature of the research as outlined above, and the fact that the script is published by Nick Hern Books, the ethnographer can 'rarely […] give absolute guarantees of anonymity' (Murphy and Dingwall, 2001, p.341). Selbourne in his account of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* used character names to also describe the actor's feelings. Yet with theatre listings websites, Twitter, and playscript publications with actor's names, anonymity cannot be guaranteed. Many qualitative researchers in clinical settings ensure anonymity and even go as far as changing 'references to months or seasons of the year in the transcripts' (Silverman, 2013, p.30), yet in this work, it would be impossible to obtain such a level of anonymity even if desired, and as preceding ethnographic theatre researchers have found, informed consent obtained by all clearly outlines to participants that anonymity in this field of study is an impossibility. No-one refused to sign the form, and all signed, agreeing to have their names used. Had they refused, the contingency would have been to anonymise all participants and the

project. It would not be possible, as discussed above, within a current knowledge-based society based on internet archives, to keep one person anonymous as most cast lists are now online.

Therefore, the informed ethical consent forms used (Appendix B) ensured that participants were aware of the ability to have their anonymity honoured. My consent forms were for the actors, stage management and director only, which ensures that there was an explicit choice for both participation, anonymity and ability to change their participation, as well as detailing the guarantee that all research recordings would be safely stored and then destroyed within twelve months of completion of the thesis (see section 3.7 below on data privacy). In order to ensure this, the ethical consent forms were distributed by the theatre's company manager directly, instead of by myself, and actors were given the opportunity to discuss the project on the first morning on a one-to-one basis, prior to consent. This was to ensure that participants did not feel coerced and consent was freely given. Wasserberg also informed actors prior to the rehearsal process of my involvement, and no-one asked for a one-to-one meeting.

3.6.3 ETHICS AND THE SUB-REHEARSAL

McAuley identifies that key moments and breakthroughs happen outside of the bounded physical space of the rehearsal room through 'discussions in the bar, on lunch or in the pub' (McAuley, 1998, p.79). It cannot be underestimated how much private reflection or sub-rehearsal work impacts on the main rehearsal process; one of Stanislavski's pupils, Russian theatre director Yevgeni Vakhtangov writes that,

> any rehearsal is only productive when in it one seeks or provides material for the next rehearsal; it is in the intervals between rehearsals that the subconscious processes the acquired material.
>
> (Vakhtangov, in Evans, 2015, p.109)

Regrettably, the ethnographic observer misses the sub-rehearsal moments. Ethically, McAuley grappled with this during her observations for the writing of *Not Magic But Work* (2012), stating that, if being present at lunchtime, listening to actors, it

> would be clearly inappropriate to take notes even though, of course, the social bonding occurring at the time was a crucial part of the process but would it not be even more unacceptable to make notes about lunchtime discussions at some later time?
>
> (McAuley, 2012, p.12)

McAuley relies only on rehearsal observations in her final work, as do I. Section 8.4.2 advocates a further study incorporating the sub-rehearsal as an extension to this research.

3.6.4 ETHICS AND ANXIETY

Murphy and Dingwall explore the ethics from the point of view that in all ethnography (especially in the study of cultures and tribes),

> participants may experience anxiety, stress guilt and damage to self-esteem [or] may form close relationships with the observer and experience loss when the study is completed'
>
> (Murphy and Dingwall, 2001, p.340).

If, for these two authors, 'the greatest risk in ethnography […] arises at the time of publication' (Murphy and Dingwall, 2001, p.341), then minimising that risk is of vital importance, hence the need for:

a) verification of ideas and thoughts through both observation and interviews;
b) a way to analyse the data that minimises risk caused by subjective opinion.

Subjectivity certainly manifested itself in Selbourne's (2010) observations of difficult actors in the rehearsal room as he privileges one voice, that of Brook the director as an omnipotent being. Murphy and Dingwall warn against setting up an elite-versus-underdog narrative, and in a rehearsal room the elite is potentially the director and the underdog the actor in relation to the 'hierarchy between director and actor' (Christie, 2015, p.158) that exists implicitly and explicitly from casting to opening night. Ensuring that actors and directors voices are equally honoured forms a part of this thesis.

Throughout the rehearsal process there were moments of personal tension between participants which related to Human Resources intervention. In order to ensure anxiety was minimised, these elements were captured in the jottings but not written up formally, following a conversation with the Artistic Director of Out of Joint, and formed part of the data reduction process. Thus, being selective ensures anxiety is minimised.

3.7 DATA MANAGEMENT

This study came under the auspices of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR[14]), introduced in 2018, which places under law collection and storage rules governing data. Detailed below are the ways in which the GDPR rules have been abided by, both in spirit and to the letter of these regulations, following a GDPR training course undertaken.

3.7.1 THE STORAGE OF DATA

- All stored data is held electronically on an external hard drive. This is password-protected; the researcher alone has the password. A backup on a University computer hard drive ensures that no data is lost; this is also password-protected and uses BitLocker;

[14] In the UK this has manifested itself as the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA).

- The recorded interviews have been downloaded from the Dictaphone and form part of the data stored on the hard drives as discussed below;
- All signed ethical forms (which include personal details) and written field jottings are kept in a locked filing cabinet in the researcher's University office.

3.7.2 THE DESTRUCTION OF DATA:

- All recorded interviews have been deleted from the Dictaphone and are now stored on the hard drives;
- The ethical forms which contain participant details will be destroyed twelve months following completion of the viva, to allow time for contacting participants, in order to comply with any changes required.

3.7.3 OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:

- Personal details have not and will not be shared;
- All field jottings, photographs, interview recordings and written-up field notes will not be shared, and are not attached as an appendix due to the personal details enclosed. These may be seen upon request by examiners for verification purposes and redaction would then be used to protect the anonymity of one actor who left the company;
- There are no exemptions under GDPR requirements, as no personal data has been accessed from a public source.

3.8 SUMMARY

Ginters asks 'do such [breakthrough] moments occur in every rehearsal? I wonder about this […] given great actors and a great director, maybe they are part of what is routine in rehearsal, but I suspect not.

(Ginters, 2006, p.59). Naturally, there were not always epiphanic 'wow' moments daily during the *Close Quarters* rehearsal period, but, as Crawford states, there were 'many and varied' (Crawford, 2015, p.197) achievements within rehearsals. Therefore, a meaningful way to answer Ginters's question is to use an ethnographic approach, as fundamentally the usefulness of this methodology is to 'add greater respect to the actor and director's job' (McAuley, 2015, l.14). Using the original framework of 'The Four Lenses of Breakthrough' allows for a concrete method of observing breakthroughs using an ethnographic methodology, respecting not only the actor and director's job, but also giving respect to the breakthrough moment: the part of rehearsal that does occur but has little research underpinning it.

This chapter has identified the qualitative methodology undertaken, examining the core components and methods of ethnographic approaches, and highlighted the key ethical considerations underpinning the choices made. The methods chosen were tested and refined during the pilot project, prior to the first rehearsal day of *Close Quarters* on September 24 2018. Chapter 4 introduces and establishes the overall context to the play, the production and its personnel.

CHAPTER 4: CONTEXT AND FRAMES

4.0 INTRODUCTION: A RETURN VISIT

At 7.28pm on a cold November night in Sheffield, I returned to watch *Close Quarters* by Kate Bowen at the Crucible Studio Theatre. This is the production which I had spent five weeks observing. At the forefront of my mind was a review from *The Guardian* website that I had read two days prior to my visit:

> The pivotal final mission scene feels rushed and abrupt and this severely undermines its emotional impact. This is emphasised by the fact that Bowen doesn't let us see the fallout among the rest of the characters, only how it affects Findlay – though [Adiza] Shardow is impressive as the ambitious young soldier given how little time she has had to prepare.
>
> (Tripney, 2018b)

This didn't feel like the play or the production I had left two weeks before, when a new actress, Adiza Shardow, had stepped into the pivotal role of Findlay following the open dress rehearsal. Three previews were cancelled and I had left the company re-rehearsing the piece with Shardow as Findlay. I was intrigued as to how and why the production had evolved, as the final mission scene certainly did not *feel* rushed the last time I had observed this played, and the fallout for Findlay's character was profound in terms of her future direction of travel.

The uncanny feeling (as articulated in 3.6.1) returned when I entered the Crucible Studio: it was simultaneously familiar yet strange. There was a physical change that had manifested during the pre-show[15]: the lighting design state[16] for this had shifted slightly, with stage light catching more of the studio's own architecture, including the ironmongery of the steel lighting grid. Nothing was hidden as it previously was. As a director, I am acutely

[15] The period of time prior to the performance beginning, as the audience waits in the auditorium.
[16] A 'state' is the name given to what the lighting looks like at any given moment.

aware of how a production evolves and develops as the run of the production continues. Yet as a researcher, the reasons behind this became a preoccupation. Designer Jones in his interview during technical rehearsals articulated the importance for him of working in congruence with the space he is designing for, yet this wasn't gaining traction during production week,

> so, in *Close Quarters*, I activated the grid by building two industrial pillars to junction with it, and they turn the grid into the ceiling of the industrial space [the play is set in an abandoned sawmill in Estonia].
>
> (Jones, 2018, l.53-54)

However, I had little time to reflect on this as the lights dipped to semi-darkness and a pre-show announcement stated that 'the role of Findlay will be played by Adiza Shardow, who will be carrying the script for certain scenes' (Field Notes, 2018, l.2069). With a final instruction to switch off mobile telephones, the lighting state turned to black, a door opened and a stark shaft of light occurred. An actress appeared backlit in the space: this actress had a different physical outline from the previous actress I saw in this role at the dress rehearsal. The audience ritualistically quietened and the production commenced.

Only eight-and-a-half weeks previously, my first encounter with this production was undertaking a pre-rehearsal interview with the director of the play and Out of Joint's Artistic Director, Kate Wasserberg. No actors had been rehearsed, and the script was still in an extremely fluid stage of development. The pre-rehearsal period is the first to be examined to set the contextual scene for the production process observed.

4.1 THE GENESIS OF THIS OBSERVATIONAL STUDY

Chapter 1 sets out the genesis for this thesis. This chapter introduces the key personnel featured in both the genesis and theatre-making process of *Close Quarters.* The artists introduced (instrumental in the two-month

ethnographic study) appear heavily throughout the data analysis of Chapters 5 and 6. This section introduces the key players: actors, director, writer, designer, fight directors and the dramaturg, as well as the Out of Joint company itself.

Also included is a critical summary of Kate Bowen's play *Close Quarters*, and how the piece evolved with each rehearsal draft, as well as the impact this had on rehearsal and acting/directing choices are identified.

4.2 THE COMPANY: OUT OF JOINT

Out of Joint, its history and previous rehearsal strategies, were introduced to me as an Undergraduate student, although I had never been privy to its inner engine room until this thesis. Using the definition of a 'text-based ensemble' (Radosavljevic, 2013, p.18) to describe the company is relevant, as the playtext, playwright and acting are at the heart of this work. Out of Joint defines itself as 'dauntless, political and joyous' (Bowen, 2018, p.xi), and all of their plays feed through these lenses in some way, such as the political dimensions of *Close Quarters*. Founded by director Max Stafford-Clark and commercial theatre producer Sonia Friedman in 1993 as a new writing company, Out of Joint has produced new plays including Timberlake Wertenbaker's *Our Country's Good* (1988), verbatim plays including *Talking to Terrorists* by Robin Soans (2005) and more recently Nina Raine's *Consent* (2017), and a revival of Andrea Dunbar's seminal piece *Rita, Sue and Bob Too* (2018-2019).

Out of Joint's current Artistic Director Wasserberg, who took over leadership from Stafford-Clark in 2017 as sole director, describes the company in her own words:

> The writer is at the heart of what we do and I am an actor's director. I think Out of Joint's work is characterised by putting the word and the text at the centre with excellent performances that are detailed and motivated and joyous and free […] What I and the company have

> in common is that moments of visual innovation have come necessarily from the text. It's not about me demonstrating my skill or putting something on top of the play. The production grows up and out through the play. I think that telling the story clearly and well, joyously, and in a way that is intended to communicate and give pleasure to an audience is what Out of Joint do, with great actors who operate without ego, and are interested in telling the story.
>
> (Wasserberg, 2018, l.191-199)

By observing Out of Joint, the study moves away from discourse that 'places the individual artist rather than a theatrical practice and process in the centre' (Boenisch, 2015, p.7). In relation to its process, the company promotes itself as an organisation that tours productions which 'spark and enrich conversations around the UK and the world […] champion[ing] under-represented voices and perspectives' (Bowen, 2018, p.xiii). Certainly, the questions and ideas at the heart of *Close Quarters* align with this philosophy, ensuring that the voices and concerns of female squaddies in the UK infantry resonate with audiences. Serendipitously, on the day of the open dress rehearsal, the UK government announced that any military role would be open to women, including the SAS[17]. Sitting in the auditorium on that day, I overheard Wasserberg and Bowen discussing this point as they waited for the house lights to go down.

From a practical perspective, Out of Joint traditionally creates work over a four-to-five-week rehearsal period. *Close Quarters* had a four-week rehearsal with a fifth week in technical and dress rehearsals, prior to previews in front of an audience. This project also had a pre-rehearsal writing and workshop period where the text and key ideas were explored, led by Wasserberg, earlier in 2018. Although this sits outside of this study (and was undertaken prior to my commencement with the ethnographic

[17] https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-45983882 details this news story.

research), discussing the workshop period with Wasserberg, she describes how she led on a week long dramaturgical exploration of the play:

> Catriona [Craig, the dramaturg], Kate [Bowen, writer] and I, plus Javaad Alipoor [Resident Associate Director of Sheffield Crucible] came and did some [dramaturgical] work with us. That was lots of dramaturgical charts and character work, and then we went through two or three drafts, and Kate then had another week with us, and a group of actors, and fight directors, where we did some physical work […]. I was really interested in how young people see war and soldiering.
>
> (Wasserberg, 2018, l.57-63)

It is clear therefore that the workshop period created a series of anchor points and frames that found their way into the heart of the final production, including the physical vocabulary of the piece, from movement and fight direction language.

Wasserberg wishes to make herself 'essentially invisible' (Wasserberg, 2018, l.194) through her directorial approach in terms of not overlaying a heavy directorial concept. She has a long association with new writing through her work at the Finborough Theatre in London, leading the new writing department. Her connection with new work continued as Associate Director of New Plays at Theatr Clwyd, Mold, under the artistic directorship of Terry Hands and supporting new playwrights at The Other Room in Cardiff where she was Artistic Director from 2014 to 2017. She describes her directorial methods as,

> very practical, and the rest of it is love. I love my actors for those four or five weeks [of rehearsal]. It doesn't matter who they are, I give them a parental love, not in a patronising way, but an unconditional love for someone who wants the best for them.
>
> I love the play. It doesn't matter what my doubts might have been. I invest in it utterly.

I love the characters. I staunchly defend even the worst character.

(Wasserberg, 2018, l.327-331)

The idea of defending the worst character became clear throughout the rehearsal process, and is discussed as a directorial frame in the forthcoming chapters. Ensuring that Wasserberg focussed on all of the characters with that energy allowed actors to find nuances and achieve breakthrough moments within this pre-decided framework.

Yet, without a play there cannot be a rehearsal. The below examines the finished published script, and I had a copy of it in my hands during my visit to the production on that mid-November evening.

4.3 THE PUBLISHED PLAY: A BRIEF SYNOPSIS

Emerging writer Kate Bowen's play *Close Quarters* was commissioned as part of the 2016 Channel 4 Playwright's Scheme, which attaches writers to theatre companies to develop work[18]. Bowen says of *Close Quarters* that it is 'a coming of age play […] the emotional and psychological challenges of navigating an environment designed for and previously populated by men' (Bowen, in Tripney, 2018).

Set in the near future (2022), the play sees the first young women to serve in close combat roles, with Alison Cormack, Sarah Findlay, and Clare Davies taking up their posts, in the knowledge that the stakes are high in relation to the expectations set of them and of themselves. Alongside Lance Corporal Brian Armstrong, these four young soldiers find themselves on patrol in a forested area of the Estonian and Russian border.

Hearing the sound of a baby's cry coming from inside an abandoned car, Private Cormack, the more impulsive member of the group, makes a split-second decision to rescue the baby, much to the frustration of the other

[18] http://www.channel4.com/info/press/news/channel-4-announces-winners-of-playwrights-scheme-bursaries details Kate Bowen's commission for *Close Quarters*.

soldiers. Upon arrival at the car, Cormack comes under rapid fire and the baby is revealed to be nothing more than a doll: a potential ruse from Russian militia to lure the platoon into danger.

Later coming under verbal attack from the majority of the other male members of the platoon (unseen in the play yet their presence is felt throughout), the fallout of this event becomes the heart of the piece. Friends since school, Cormack and Findlay reveal opposing attitudes to what happened, which becomes the catalyst for deeply-held grudges, beliefs and opinions to come to the surface, resulting in an early morning rooftop fight between these two old friends. Upon manoeuvres the following day in Predka, a small (fictional) town near the Russian border, the platoon come under fire yet again, this time resulting in the loss of Cormack's life. There is ambiguity surrounding both of these major events and the audience do not know whether the bullets were fired by angry locals or local Russian militia.

In a parallel plotline, Captain Anna Sands, a high-ranking female intelligence officer attached to the platoon for a short time, reveals to Private Findlay that she believes her to have the ability to enter the military academy at Sandhurst, to train as an Officer. Torn between her loyalty to the platoon and realising her potential, the play's subplot surrounding Findlay's decision threads throughout the piece.

Echoing Tennessee Williams's *The Glass Menagerie* (1944)*, Close Quarters* is framed as a memory play (bookended at the start and the end of the piece) and speaking from the year 2032, Findlay reveals in a series of direct address monologues to the audience that she did indeed go on to train at Sandhurst to become a Major:

> I have my own company.
>
> Ninety-eight percent men.
>
> But there's a couple of females there.
>
> (Bowen, 2018, p.85)

Using a fictional parallel to echo real world military events, the overall tone of the play is that of a high-paced realistic drama. Comic interludes are woven into the play's structure, allowing for moments of respite from the play's tension. In the script, Bowen calls in her stage directions for 'training movement sequence[es]' (Bowen, 2018, p.6) and 'parkour' (Bowen, 2018, p.65) where we witness the platoon and individuals undertaking extraordinary military sequences. In the final production, this physical language became the basis for the scene change choreography and dynamic. A full play synopsis can be found in Appendix A.

4.4 DRAFT UPON DRAFT

The play as outlined above did not arrive until three weeks into the five-week rehearsal process. The first version I received from Wasserberg on 2 August 2018 was already in its third draft. It did not contain the framing device of the memory play via the soliloquies[19], and neither, according to the director, did it have a 'conclusive ending' (Wasserberg, 2018b). Regardless of the draft changes, what remains at the heart of each one is Bowen's core idea of the 'deep interest in the individual women [and how they] meet their own needs and succeed without losing or damaging what they love' (Bowen, 2018, p.xvi). Indeed, this was highlighted by reviewer Velda Harris for the British Theatre Guide Online, commenting that 'the play raises issues that […] a prevailing culture […] denigrates and humiliates women' (Harris, 2018).

Therefore, upon re-examination of the drafts, there was an evident development, deepening and solidifying of this core idea to 'get those woman characters centre stage […] to become authentic and touch real life' (Craig, 2019, p.84). The initial rehearsal draft (Draft 6.2, entitled '2018a' in this thesis's references) that the company worked from for the first three

[19] A soliloquy is a direct address to the audience, as opposed to a monologue, which may sit within a scene's structure and dialogue.

weeks of rehearsal arrived on the Friday before the rehearsal commenced. I was personally struck when reading this by the extraordinariness and uniqueness of the female military infantry members, in terms of the pressures they are under physically, mentally and socially. There were more references to the physical training since the third draft, and the play's central question was more explicit, in relation to what people do under extreme duress. This was foregrounded through a clashing of the character's opinions, and with more dialectical discussion around the efficacy of females on the front line, with Captain Sands hinting at the potential of an inability to have children in the future. In one scene she tacitly implies this to Findlay:

> SANDS: Statistically you have a higher chance of sustaining more injuries than the men you joined up with.
>
> You know the kinds of injuries.
>
> Joints – pelvis, particularly pelvis.
>
> (Bowen, 2018a, p.52)

The wider platoon, especially the male figures, were introduced and off-stage characters had more developed, deeper personalities, throughout this draft. The pressing issue in relation to the struggle of the women against oppression from some of the men was clearer, and was coupled with the increased use of military technical language peppered throughout the piece. It was evident that the world of the play was more vivid overall and the relationship between Findlay and Cormack heightened, specifically in references to their shared upbringing in Greenock, Scotland. Findlay informs the audience of how they met in one of her soliloquies, which Bowen writes in dialect:

> I wis ten. Ten years old.
>
> She was on a bike wearing this ludicrous outfit a tutu and trackies and those plastic wee jelly shoes.
>
> (Bowen, 2018a, p.3)

Having rehearsed with this 2018a draft for three weeks, the final rehearsal script (Version 7, entitled 2018b in the references) was delivered to the whole company on 9 October 2018, in time for the remaining two weeks of rehearsals. Bowen had made the timeline sharper and clearer, ensuring actors and creatives understood that the play's action occurs intensively over several days. This became a pressure cooker for the action and was vital as a trigger for actor's breakthrough moments as discussed in Chapters 5 and 6.

The play's central relationship also became clearer in Draft 7. In the opening monologue, the back-story between Findlay and Cormack became intensified, clarifying in the exposition how and when they met, as well as why they became friends. The interchange from Version 6.2 above to Version 7 became:

> I wis ten when I first met Ally. Ten years old
>
> She was on a bike wearing this ludicrous outfit a tutu and trackies and those plastic wee jelly shoes… After that – we pretty much did everything together.
>
> (Bowen, 2018b, p.3)

One issue raised by the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) actors in the first week of rehearsals, during round table work, was as to why, in the new rehearsal draft, references to race were reduced from previous drafts. The racial issues were reintroduced in Version 7 in relation to what it means to be a BAME member of infantry. Findlay states:

> You know what they [the platoon] see when I walk in the room?
>
> (*Exaggerated whisper*) She's black!
>
> (Bowen, 2018b, p.58)

The play began to gravitate more towards the protagonist of Findlay and her point of view, with additional dialogue. Supporting this, in Scene Five, she describes her emotional journey through the inciting incident of

Scene Three, and her language is more colloquial in the memory scenes, and more formal in the 'present-day' framing scenes. This clarifies the plot point that Findlay has been changed through her training and that her Sandhurst experience made her speech less colloquial, since she trained as a Major. Indeed, the language overall is more colloquially urgent between the Squaddies. It is rawer, unapologetic, and tougher:

CORMACK: Imagine ticks in your fanny.

DAVIES: No thanks.

CORMACK: Embedded in your flange/

(Bowen, 2018b, p.6)

Finally, the world of the play becomes wider still with additional off-stage characters referred to, such as Major Ahrens (Bowen, 2008b, p.37), building up a wider picture of the hundred-strong military unit. There is also a political specificity in relation to the imagined events occurring between Estonia, Russia and China.

It is not unusual for a play to undergo so many rewrites. Stern (2000) alludes to the constant re-writing and developing of scripts in new plays dating back to the Early Modern period, with prologues and epilogues in Shakespearean and Restoration periods calling for changes prior to the third-night writer's benefit nights, whereby playwrights received their monies. Tracing this through to the present day, from my personal experience as a director, sometimes rewrites are indeed as profuse as those that took place between drafts in *Close Quarters.*

For the purpose of this thesis, I will be referencing the extant scripts used in rehearsals as discussed above (referenced as 2018a and 2018b) as these were the ones through which the breakthroughs were made. Any references to the final published edition of the script are explicitly highlighted.

4.5 THE ACTORS

Figure 3 identifies the actors involved in the piece. Wasserberg cast actors she felt to be right for the role as written. Out of Joint is not a permanent ensemble repertory company, where actors are cross-cast in several productions throughout a season. Wasserberg was able to cast actors specifically, cognisant of the need for the extraordinary nature of the physical demands of the military physical training. Due to the variant nature of their backgrounds and experiences, it is evident that the company needed to be unified in the early part of rehearsals. There is not a shared rehearsal room language or the pre-existing deep trust between a new company that may accrue from an ensemble or repertory theatre model. The impact of this is discussed in the following chapters.

Other creative collaborators had a direct influence on this production; their impact is evident throughout this thesis. As a new work company, Wasserberg assigned Out of Joint's Literary Manager Catriona Craig to the role of dramaturg, supporting Bowen and herself in the play's architectural construction and choices. Craig (also an academic at Buckinghamshire New University) whilst not working full time on *Close Quarters*, had worked extensively with Bowen prior to rehearsals, and throughout rehearsals was present at pivotal moments: at round-table work, run-throughs and the dress rehearsal, mainly working notes with Bowen outside of the room, and inside the room sharing her research and the contextual framework with the company:

> With an Out of Joint hat on, a lot [of my work is] about research and as a partner to the writer as they find their way into a project. Being completely led by them is important, but knowing I am going to be at my most useful if I am exposed to [their] thinking and research.
>
> (Craig, 2019, l.36)

Whilst a dramaturg's definition is a mercurial one, Craig's role sat within Turner and Behrndt's definition that,

> a 'production dramaturg' may be allocated to specific productions, working with the director in rehearsal, probably offering advice on textual changes, researching contextual information, offering comment on the evolving work and so on.
>
> (Turner and Behrndt, 2016, p.8)

Inputting into the production concept, fight company RC-Annie is the 'UK's first and only fight directing duo'[20]. Rachel Bown-Williams and Ruth Cooper-Brown spent considerable time in the rehearsal room, balancing the more traditional fight elements with combat movement and physical language frames. As with designer and dramaturg, Bown-Williams and Cooper-Brown worked with Wasserberg prior to *Close Quarters* at Theatr Clywd.

4.6 PRE-REHEARSAL FRAMES ESTABLISHED

This section examines the frames upon which certain rehearsal room methods were predicated. As posited in Chapter 2, actors in a rehearsal process work within boundaries of pre-defined frames that have been established predominantly by the director and their creative team prior to the rehearsal process. A certain number of the *Close Quarters* rehearsal frames were unlocked in the workshop period as identified by Wasserberg.

[20] As they describe themselves in their publicity: https://www.rc-annie.com/about-us/

Actor	Role	Trained	Theatre Experience	Worked with Out of Joint	Previously worked with Wasserberg
CHLOE-ANN TYLOR	Private Cormack	Royal Conservatoire Scotland (2017)	Dundee Rep, Glasgow Citizens	No	No
BRADLEY BANTON	Sergeant Adeyemi	Bristol Old Vic (2017)	Professional Stage Debut	No	No
SOPHIE MELVILLE	Private Clare Davies	Royal Welsh College (2013)	Theatre by the Lake, National Theatre, Theatr Clwyd, Orange Tree	No	Yes
DYLAN WOOD	Private Armstrong	Bristol Old Vic (2017)	Watermill Newbury	No	No
KATHRYN O'REILLY	Captain Sands	LAMDA (2008)	Watford Palace, Arcola, ATC, Trafalgar Studios, Soho Theatre	Yes	No
ADIZA SHARDOW[21]	Private Sarah Findlay	Royal Conservatoire Scotland (2010)	Professional Stage Debut	No	No

Figure 3: The actors of *Close Quarters.*

[21] Due to unforeseen circumstances, the original actress playing the lead protagonist Sarah Findlay had to withdraw from the production. Throughout my working notes, where there are any references to Findlay, only the character's name is used. Nevertheless, her successor Adiza Shardow (who joined after the first preview and whom I never saw directly work) consented to an interview following the production and discussed her breakthroughs.

Primarily, in terms of the acting style frame, *Close Quarters* fundamentally demanded psychological realism. Wasserberg states in her pre-rehearsal interview that she said to the fight directors that,

> I will give you a cast that are physically extraordinary [...] Often what happens in casting is a slippage where you think "Oh well, it will be a fine," but I didn't want that to be the case, as there's something about the physical extraordinariness of the women that is central to making us explore the general through the specific, and that's what we are striving for.
>
> (Wasserberg, 2018, l.161-166)

Therefore, verisimilitude in the acting style was required; the audience must believe, for Wasserberg, that the female squaddies had undertaken army training, and that realism was sought. Whilst in rehearsal objectives, actions and stakes were explored within the realm of believability of the hierarchy and the psychologically realistic relationships between each character. The full extent of the rehearsal process working within this frame of realism is discussed in Chapters 5 and 6, and was also highlighted by the review of *Close Quarters* in *The Stage*:

> The writing is ribald and often very funny, while also alert to differences in class and military hierarchy – particularly true in the privates' exchanges with the older, more experienced Captain Anna Sands (Kathryn O'Reilly).
>
> (Tripney, 2018b)

In relation to the world of the play that the actors inhabit, whilst the style of the acting is in the realist frame, the scenographic frame became both a metaphor for the ideas contained within the play, and an obstacle course that the characters needed to navigate in parallel with their own psychological journeys. Jones, the production's set and costume designer who had worked with Wasserberg several times before, described his influence thus:

> My principle influence in the design of *Close Quarters* was the [Sheffield Crucible Theatre] studio itself and what I did was steer the design and the framing of the play to best use the studio's inherent asset, which is a modernist industrial feel […] Knowing that was possible, in one meeting with Kate Wasserberg I suggested we might want to set the piece as a framing device in an industrial environment and let the play function within it. By doing this, there could be enough flexibility with any changes to the play it wouldn't matter in relation to the performance space as the people could live in that environment.
>
> (Jones, 2018, l.62-70)

The opening visual production image for the monologue that frames the memory play became Major Findlay walking into the old saw-mill in Estonia that the Unit had occupied during the central tensions of the play. Wasserberg was able to use and open a small door embedded within the actual studio's industrial dock doors. Findlay stepped into the saw-mill, backlit from the light which cast the long and looming shadow over the stage as she surveys (from the future) this base. Jones's philosophy towards design is that he is,

> not looking to design a set you 'plonk' in a space that the performance happens *on.* As a designer you are looking to provoke feeling and manipulate experience and see yourself as a performer in the process actually. I consider myself as a performer – I put a performance on that is in tune with the play and the venue.
>
> (Jones, 2018, l.106-109)

Wasserberg in her pre-rehearsal interview also stated that,

> once we had the memory play idea, we had the idea of the sawmill being pulled back to nature where moss is growing on the walls, which makes it not literal, and it frees me up as a director. Max thinks about how the show moves and thinks about how I, as a director, can

> then use the space to create strong shapes to allow for the dialogue that the play needs. He then gives us flexibility to discover things in the room but he's holding you all the time.
>
> (Wasserberg, 2018, l.223-228)

Jones presented these frames of memory and obstacles to the company as they were introduced to the world they were to inhabit on day one of rehearsals. Introducing the model box[22] of the production (Figures 4 & 5), Jones alluded to the world they were to inhabit and his creation of installation within the studio which was 'tying our world into the world of the theatre' (Field Notes, 2018,l.118), with Wasserberg supporting this, stating that 'we move from a cocoon to a warzone' (Field Notes, 2018, l.119). This became a rehearsal frame for the actor's decision-making within the scenographic choices. The actors could therefore move fluidly within the space and the design became the battleground, with old farmyard equipment morphing into the car that the 'baby' is hidden within in Scene Three. The actors must imagine and envisage that it is a real car, however, and not work stylistically within their acting style:

> It is also clear that the installation concept spills into a semi-immersive experience with the front rows of the audience sitting on the military as Max [Jones] wants plastic chairs so they become the platoon.
>
> (Field Notes, 2018, l.120-122)

Although the use of plastic chairs for the audience was abandoned, the idea of the audience being subsumed into the studio environment of an abandoned saw-mill was maintained by exposing the studio's industrial elements of beams, balconies and steel bar lighting grids, and enhanced with

[22] A model box is a 1:25 ratio scale 3D model of the finished production, used to show actors, producers, and directors the world the characters will eventually inhabit. It is also used by the scenic artists and carpenters to aid in the accurate building and scenic painting of the set.

light by the time of my return visit. Ruth Deller's review on the website 'Broadway World' highlighted this semi-immersive world:

> The intimate theatre, its set comprised of canisters, scaffolding, oil drums and debris serves at different points as base camp and rubble-strewn enemy territory. Inventive use of lighting, sound, scent and texture take the audience into the close quarters as the soldiers face threats both internal and external.
>
> (Deller, 2018)

The rehearsal room frames pre-decided by Wasserberg and the creative team within which the Close Quarters actors worked within were:

1. Psychological realism as the acting style;
2. Actors needed to have a sense of physical fitness verisimilitude for the audience to believe that their characters had undertaken a year's training and would be capable of undertaking military action;
3. The composite set was to allow for imaginative responses working within the world of a memory play. The set was a playground of obstacles to mirror the characters' psychological obstacles and journeys;
4. Actors were to become the guardians of their characters: all characters were to justify their own behaviours;
5. Working within a memory play frame, actors therefore had choices to make in terms of reflecting on events from future perspectives;
6. The physical storytelling had to be clear to an audience and the psychological detail had to marry with this.

Figure 4: Model box of *Close Quarters*, indicating the 'false' steel girders that support the actual lighting grid above, and the exposed (open) dock door of the studio at the back of the model box. The balcony to the left of the picture was built by extending the architecture of the actual studio balcony. (Reproduced with kind permission of Max Jones)

Figure 5: Designer Max Jones discussing the model box with the company on day one of rehearsals.

4.7 REHEARSAL SPACES

The spaces in which these rehearsal breakthroughs take place are of importance as 'the relationship between actors and the spaces and places in which they work is profound and far-reaching' (Filmer and Rossmanith, 2011, p.236), where space relates to the type of atmosphere and tone set for creative work. As a director, personal experience suggests that actors do not enjoy rehearsing comedy in a cold space, for example, and that echoing rooms are not conducive to plays that contain verbal dexterity and repartee. The conditions within which people work within are important. In the field of art therapy, Shaun McNiff states that 'the agents of transformation are more likely to be in the atmosphere or ambience [of the creative space] than within the person' (McNiff, 2004, p.19). Therefore, in order for actors to risk-take and let go, the creative space must 'emphasise listening, being present, and letting go of tight controls so that things outside our current awareness can come forward' (McNiff, 2004, p.28).

Director Bogart also refers to her working environment, whereby she attends 'to the quality of the room, including punctuality, lack of clutter and cleanliness' (Bogart, 2001, p.125). Certainly, director Wasserberg, through the first week of rehearsals for *Close Quarters*, wanted to achieve a de-cluttered space. A modest (77 sq. meter) room allowed for a company of approximately thirty (made up of Sheffield Theatres and Out of Joint staff, plus the production's director, writer, dramaturg, assistant director and actors) to be present on the first day of rehearsals. Out of Joint, housed in Thane Villas, Holloway, North London, accommodated *Close Quarters* rehearsals for the first two weeks.

The ground floor rehearsal room at Thane Villas is a light and airy space (with windows running along the whole of one side) and on the first day actors were relaxed and chatted with coffees in hand from the small adjoining kitchen. It is a warm space, temperature-wise, which allowed actors and creatives to relax, and it felt conducive for a creative endeavour. Yet, the rehearsal space is smaller than that of the Sheffield Crucible Theatre

Studio, where the piece would play, so prior to the first rehearsal the stage management team made decisions about which elements of the groundplan[23] (Figure 6) were included in the mark-up[24].

Immediately, and as she alluded to in her pre-rehearsal interview, from day one of rehearsals Wasserberg was interested in practicalities, making sure that the actors' eventual connection with the performance space was at the heart of the mark-up. She asked the stage management team to 'take [that bit] up as we need a diagonal. It's really important in the scene with the cart' (Field Notes, 2018, l.170). The scene referred to is the central turning point of Scene Three where the characters come under fire. The importance of spatial dynamics for the director, plus demanding a clear rehearsal space – '"Clear this clutter!" exclaimed Wasserberg to the stage management team' (Field Notes, 2018, l.171) – meant that the actors' work is at the heart of Wasserberg's thinking; as Mnouchkine states, 'I think an actor needs a magnificent empty space' (Mnouchkine, in Williams, 1998, p.36). This is to ensure that the world of the play can be built in the room, rather than being indirectly influenced by previous production props and sets 'ghosting' the current world.

For the third week of rehearsals, the company relocated to Sheffield, not on the Studio stage itself where they would finally perform, but in the Lyceum Theatre top floor rehearsal room (Figure 8), since the Lyceum Theatre is part of Sheffield Theatres. As Out of Joint was co-producing with Sheffield Theatres, there was a split in the rehearsal locations. This new space allowed the company to achieve a full mark-up on the rehearsal floor as well as a mock-up of the raised platform that the set was using, constructed crudely yet practically from steel deck pieces on scaffold legs.

[23] A groundplan is a designer's 2D birds-eye scale drawing

[24] The mark-up is the taped area of the rehearsal room floor that corresponds to the groundplan. This is to scale and may include walls, doors and key architectural elements, so that actors can orientate themselves in the rehearsal room, prior to moving into the theatre.

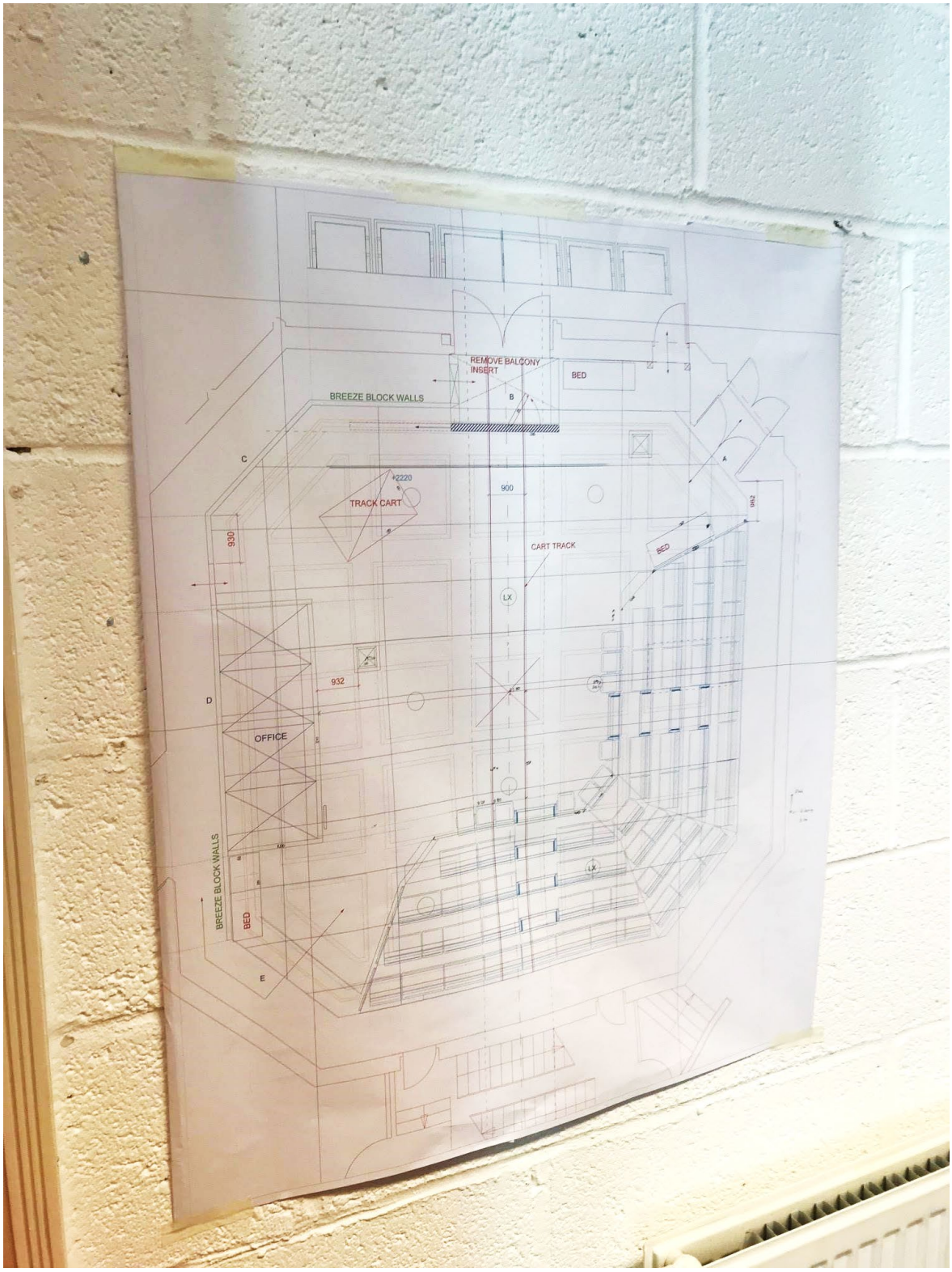


Figure 6: The groundplan on the rehearsal room wall at Out of Joint.

Figure 7: The relatively small rehearsal room at Out of Joint.

Arriving on the first day at Sheffield, Wasserberg joked (when I asked to sit in a similar position in relation to her as I had in London), 'it's all the same!' (Field Notes, 2018, l.1094); and yet, it was not. The mark-up on the rehearsal room floor was exact to the studio they were to perform in and unlike in London, allowed for a full-scale mark-up to be achieved and therefore precise blocking and physical shaping to manifest itself. Being lighter and higher as a rehearsal space, it contained lockers for the cast to change on a balcony area, and so decluttered the space from extraneous items, and was more secluded within the theatre; therefore neighbours were unable to complain about any noise. This had occurred at the Out of Joint office and rehearsal room in London. Yet the Sheffield space had more thresholds to pass to get into. Firstly, a stage door, with its 'keeper' and sign-in sheets, and four floors to climb. The architecture of the building, similar to many theatres in the U.K., means that its rehearsal rooms are out of bounds to the public, which continues to maintain a mystery of the inner workings of a rehearsal process:

> Entry to rehearsal rooms is frequently controlled and policed, with access to non-practitioners restricted, creating what rehearsal observer Susan Letzler Cole has aptly called "the hidden world" of theatre making.
>
> (Filmer and Rossmanith, 2011, p.230)

The Lyceum Theatre is the receiving house[25] of Sheffield Theatres, and its rehearsal room occupies the backstage private area. Even visiting companies would not naturally visit the top floor without a definite reason, and when the doors were closed (Figure 9), rehearsals were definitely a private affair.

[25] A type of theatre which 'receives' touring productions, rather than a 'producing' house, which generates its own work.

Figure 8: The Lyceum Theatre rehearsal room, which could accommodate the mark out of the groundplan. The balcony can be seen to the right of the picture.

Figure 9: The thresholds of the Sheffield rehearsal room: two sets of double doors on the top floor of the Lyceum Theatre.

4.8 THE LENSES OF DISCOVERY

Having set the scene and specified key initial contexts, this thesis now moves into the heart, narrating in Chapter 5 and 6 the core data from the ethnographic study, using 'The Four Lenses of Breakthrough'.

When viewing breakthroughs through Lens One: the individual moments of recognition, a new discovery is not witnessed, but an individual moment of recognition. For example, the director may unlock something for the actor who has a personal moment of realisation. This is not a breakthrough in the sense of something new, but a confirmation or realisation based on prior understanding that may have been forgotten or not appreciated fully. This leads to a small moment of realisation where someone becomes fully aware of a fact.

Lens Two is an 'aha' moment: an individual discovery by an actor or director. This is a moment where something new occurs or is discovered, such as through the bridging of two ideas, or following a trigger (such as a directorial offer), a breakthrough moment occurred. Lens Three is also one through which an 'aha' moment manifests, but this time as a collective discovery moment, shared between actor and director or between actor(s) and actor(s).

Finally, when viewing a breakthrough through Lens Four, a collective company 'wow' moment is witnessed. This is a rare occurrence which happens when everyone in the rehearsal room recognises that 'the variables have come together' (McAuley, 2015, l.44). Whilst McAuley initially, as discussed above, defined a 'wow' moment from the perspective of the observer or the director, this thesis extends this to being a shared moment, with everybody in the room recognising a major breakthrough has prevailed.

Using a thematic rather than a chronological approach, Chapter 5 examines the first two of these lenses: the individual recognition and discovery moments. Chapter 6 concentrates on the final two lenses: collective discoveries and 'wow' moments that took place during the *Close*

Quarters rehearsal process. Analysing each of the four lenses, Chapters 5 and 6 also examine when certain moments happened, why and how they happened and the overall impact these had on the creative process, both individually for the actor and for the overall production, which feeds back into the main research question of this thesis, and the accompanying four subsidiary questions. The following chapters continue to clarify and deepen the definition of breakthrough moments when viewed through these lenses, thereby sharpening how and why these moments come about, and their value to the final production. These are verified with correlations to the post-rehearsal interviews as to the efficacy of the observational analysis, in relation to the participant's subjective felt experiences reflecting on action as,

> according to Atkinson and Silverman […] the interview society is characterized by the following features and beliefs […] (6) persons have access to their own experiences; (7) first-person narratives are very valuable. They are the site of personal meaning.
>
> (Denzin, 2001, p.28)

The site of personal meaning of the participants clarifies their subjective reality of a particular moment through the interviews. Whilst honouring the subjective phenomenological approach of the felt experience in the moment for each actor, there is a uniqueness to this overall rehearsal period too. This chapter explores one rehearsal process as a case study and the inter-relationship between its people, and Chapters 7 and 8 draws on how this case study can illuminate potential themes to explore in other rehearsal periods. As Stern states,

> in writing about rehearsal, it has been necessary to write about the relationship of actors to plays, and plays to actors, and the relationship of the audience to both.
>
> (Stern, 2000, p.290)

Through the *Close Quarters* process, the actor's relationship to the text is crucial, and several moments saw the writer make textual alterations as actors made breakthroughs, yet I believe Stern misses the directorial influence in how actors connect to, with, and through the text, as identified in the examples through the following chapters.

4.9 SUMMARY

Presenting a brief overview of the final production of *Close Quarters*, before returning to the pre-rehearsal period and the decisions that Wasserberg and her creative term undertook to create the set of rehearsal frames that the actors would work within during rehearsals has been the focus of Chapter 4. A picture has also been painted of the rehearsal spaces, and the scene set for the personnel working on the production, who will be encountered repeatedly through the next chapters. Beginning to use a more narrative style in the analysis of the rehearsal room practice, utilising the ethnographic method of narrative accounts, the chapter reintroduced the types of breakthroughs that may be observed through 'The Four Lenses of Breakthrough', and argued that the frequency of the breakthroughs is not as linear as may be expected, and that 'wow' moments are fewer than expected. It is to the findings viewed through 'The Four Lenses of Breakthrough' that this thesis now turns, concentrating first in Chapter 5 on the two individual lenses of breakthrough. The style of Chapters 5 and 6 continues to utilise a narrative writing technique, forming the main ethnographic and analytical account of *Close Quarters.*

CHAPTER 5: THE REHEARSAL PROCESS 1 - INDIVIDUAL BREAKTHROUGHS

5.0 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 5 analyses and presents the data of the individual moments in relation to examining breakthroughs seen through Lenses One and Two; initial recognitions, and individual discoveries. The chapter draws upon the full five weeks of the observational study in the rehearsal room, coupled with verification from post-rehearsal interviews and placed into a wider contextual frame via practitioner interviews and wider data collection, such as actors' rehearsal script annotations.

Concentrating on the trigger for breakthroughs, data is examined in order to answer the main and subsidiary research questions of what is a breakthrough; when and how was it triggered is also assessed. Each moment will then be analysed, relating to the subsidiary questions of the meaningfulness of a moment to the overall process, and how actors articulated these moments, and any awareness they were having that this was happening.

The individual lenses form the bedrock of Chapter 5, and the shared and collective lenses will be the focus of Chapter 6.

5.1 LENS ONE: INDIVIDUAL MOMENTS OF RECOGNITION – BIRTHING, NOT BUILDING.

Defining Lens One as individual recognition moments where actors or directors experience in the rehearsal, as opposed to the sub-rehearsal, are small moments of learning and insight that take place when an individual aligns different pieces of information together. For instance, when new information (often, as identified throughout this chapter, this is a directorial offer) aligns with another piece of information from an actor's individual

work, from analysing the script, or drawing on their own research from their sub-rehearsal activities.

This relates to confirming or strengthening something that the individual already knows, or which may have been lying dormant. What was frequently witnessed throughout *Close Quarters* was a clear moment of understanding through the recognition of a detail that often manifested itself physically with nodding and a vocal 'uh-huh', and quiet affirmations such as 'yes' in the acknowledgment. Often, this is when prior information and new knowledge merged and there was 'discovery of a non-obvious connection between new information and prior knowledge' (Longhurst, 2010, p.155). This dormancy relates to Demidov's notion of how an actor transforms into a character as 'nothing needs to be built but rather birthed […] You should seek character not inside the self, but outside of it' (Demidov, 2016, p.506); actors birth something that is already in existence, albeit dormant. The *Oxford English Dictionary*'s definition of the word 'recognition' is where one experiences 'the mental process of identifying what has been known before' (1989, VIII, p.341), rather than merely being introduced to the fact or indeed building a fact from a place of no knowledge. Birthing (not building from scratch) is how I respond to what I was witnessing: actors had brought knowledge with them through their pre-rehearsal work.

5.1.1 THE DIRECTOR'S RECOGNITION

Historically the director has been constructed as an omnipotent being, as Selbourne and Croall's accounts demonstrate. Delgado's 1996 book *In Contact with the Gods? Directors Talk Theatre* explicitly questions this premise in its title through the use of a question mark. The very first recognition moment during *Close Quarters* was for the director herself, demonstrating that she is a colleague within the process, as opposed to an all-knowing, omnipotent presence. Forty minutes into the first day, Wasserberg was the first to vocalise an individual moment of recognition

when she had clarity on the previous circumstances that the platoon that Bowen had created: they had been together not only for the six months' basic training, but a further six-month specialist training, for the actual mission in Estonia that they undertake in the play. This information was not in the script as a given circumstance, but offered by Melville from her pre-rehearsal interview with an army officer. The 'sub-rehearsal' (Crawford, 2018, p.187) was therefore at play on day one, as Wasserberg stated 'wow, wow, really useful' (Field Notes, 2018, l.83), lighting up and expressing affirmation through her physicality and joyous warmth in her response,

> this was really important for me, I draw a lot on characters' pasts, immediate and distant, to inform how I approach a script in rehearsals […] I was incredibly grateful to Sophie [Melville] for this piece of insight. They are really close, this unit, they have been together a year! That changed the fundamental dynamics at play […] opening up possibilities I hadn't seen before.
>
> (Wasserberg, 2019, l.12-18)

Wasserberg demonstrated her own openness to a genuine breakthrough which set the tone for the rehearsal period: a collaborative and ensemble-based one, where no question was seen as too ridiculous to ask, echoing Alfreds who suggests that in a rehearsal room 'everyone is allowed to be a fool, and no question is too stupid' (Alfreds, 2017, p.35). Ensuring that the whole room is an inquisitive one, and the director isn't omnipotent, relates to director Bogart's statement that,

> It is not the director's responsibility to produce results but, rather, to create the circumstances in which something might happen […] With one hand firmly on the specifics and one hand reaching to the unknown, you start to work.
>
> (Bogart, 2001, p.124)

In this circumstance, Wasserberg tacitly created an environment where the director is not a despotic or omnipotent God-like figure (the sort culturally

appropriated by such plays as Michael Frayn's *Noises Off* or films such as Mel Brooks's *The Producers*), but part of a team who is equally as vulnerable, with their own knowledge gaps. Wasserberg's breakthrough was vital in anchoring the character's year-long relationships prior to the opening of the play and her notes for Scene One were constantly returning to this nature of their group formation. Director van Hove suggests that some directors

> think they have to display they are the boss of the production, but I try to avoid this and put the team forward, and I'm part of the team [and] during the rehearsal process you might make a mistake, but as a team you are together, and then you can change your plan overnight. We [the permanent creative team] are not afraid of doing that.
>
> A team gives warmth, loyalty and security. You're secure.
>
> (van Hove, 2019, l.165-171)

This early moment of recognition was certainly a game-changer for the rehearsal process. Witnessing the company opening up from this moment by asking questions to and of each other, Wasserberg deliberately asked the assistant director and dramaturg specific questions to ensure everyone was part of the process. 'From day one I am not the only one with the answers and the only person allowed to know stuff. We all need to take responsibility for knowing that stuff' (Wasserberg, 2018, l.137-138), she states, and actively demonstrated this.

As a director, Wasserberg does not undertake long first-day talks about the concept of the production or readthroughs. There was a visible relaxation as she stated that 'we're not having a readthrough. I find them pointless before you've created a character. Let's read the play; not acting, although you might want to sense your way through it' (Field Notes, 2018, l.17-19) creating conditions for relaxation and more active listening as the reading was positioned around anchoring the actors into the world of the play. By not forcing actors to create a character, but examining the world

that their characters will eventually inhabit, the actors referred to their characters in third person and didn't push for a finished result. Often it felt akin to an academic seminar: questioning, probing and revealing. *Close Quarters* had Catriona Craig as its dramaturg, adding a further layer of detail and levels of research:

> The dramaturg helps the director […] to refocus, or at least, to experience the work from a different perspective. The director may not always be able to maintain an objective perspective and the dramaturg can help by sustaining a wider perspective. [Dramaturg Hildegard] de Vuyst implies that she does not aim to give her opinion, so much as to describe what seems to be going on in the work.
>
> (Turner and Behrndt, 2016, p.161)

There was certainly a dependency on the director as the company began to form, as Wasserberg drove the action, yet demonstrated in this early stage of group formation that the whole company can take responsibility for the theatre-making process, and that directorially she is open for change and discovery. Educational psychologist Bruce Tuckman states there is a dependency on the leader (i.e. the director) at this early stage where,

> coincident with testing in the interpersonal realm is the establishment of dependency relationships with leaders, other group members, or pre-existing standards. It may be said that orientation, testing, and dependence constitute the group process of *forming*.
>
> (Tuckman, 1965, p.396)

5.1.2 AN ACTOR'S FIRST RECOGNITION

Many recognition moments witnessed through Lens One were related to the actors clarifying their given circumstances. This was particularly prevalent in the mental reconnaissance round-table work of the first three

days of rehearsal. Tylor's articulation of the importance of the given circumstance of her age 'I keep forgetting I'm 20' (Field Notes, 2018, l.332) in response to realising how youthful her character's attitude is towards McLeish (a major unseen male figure with whom she has had sexual intercourse in the offstage action), became prominent in her longer-term thinking. Questioning why she wasn't calmer and more reflective towards McLeish's bullying mentality, Tylor clarified that this was an important moment of recognition: 'I do remember thinking "remember you're 20" and who I was when I was 20 […] thinking who she is and why she is there now' (Tylor, 2019, l.90), which also linked to her pre-rehearsal research. Tylor had asked her father, himself an ex-squaddie, about life in a platoon and,

> because my dad was so young when he joined – he was 16 – the thing with me about the people who join the forces in the 16-18 bracket who are squaddies […] you have to remember they are still children, and people often forget that […] they should be jovial and more stupid.
>
> (Tylor, 2019, l.49-53)

Aligning her pre-rehearsal research with Wasserberg's rehearsal room reminder of this basic given circumstance had a profound effect, as Tylor immediately became more impulsive in her approach to her character's surroundings. The character became less thought-centred and more action-centred, working from impulse, and was less mature in her perceptions of her environment and other people. This recognition allowed Tylor to undertake a process of letting go and anchored her to the character's key given circumstance.

A recognition moment also manifested itself for the actress playing Findlay in response to this section of the play:

> DAVIES: Captain Sands and I were talking trucks and tanks earlier – apparently that battle group had some brand-new ones that are just insane.

(*Findlay looks sharply at Davies. Sands becomes aware she may have made a mistake*).

(Bowen, 2018a, p.39)

The actress playing Findlay asked what the 'look' referenced in the stage directions above signified. The response allowed for recognition from the actress in relation to the scene's given circumstances as Wasserberg replied 'Sands has been talking to Davies about the equipment and not you' (Field Notes, 2018, l.343). Witnessing the actress nod in relation to this simple note, the company (who were all present) are therefore reminded tacitly to recognise the importance of understanding the basic dramaturgy that they will embody as they move into the deeper stages of rehearsals. In the above instance, this concerned a Private having covert conversations with an Intelligence Officer, and Findlay's look related to that of her feeling left out of a connection with an Officer whom she was building trust with.

By the third day of rehearsals, only one individual discovery moment was seen through Lens Two, though I had (wrongly) assumed there might have been more transpiring by this point. This is, in part, due to the fact that

> the work of an artist is rarely so dramatic or revelatory. Most creative practice is built on the mastery of structures and processes, of understanding form, narrative and technique.
>
> (Henley, 2018, p.11)

thereby confirming breakthroughs and creative achievements are 'the result of a hard slog, of the dedicated learning of a craft' (Henley, 2018, p.99) in terms of the arrival at understanding. Certainly, the round-table work of the early few days of rehearsals of *Close Quarters* created an environment for small moments of recognition to occur as the facts of the world were established, as well as how their characters would react within this world. In order to allow an environment where an actor's role is, according to acting guru Sandford Meisner, 'living truthfully under imaginary circumstances'

(1987: p.15) then the given circumstances must be anchored and understood prior to living within them.

5.1.3 'LET IT BE SHIT!'

The afternoon of the third day of week one saw Wasserberg moving her cast from the mental reconnaissance round-table work to allowing a rough physical shape on the scenes to emerge, often referred to as 'blocking'[26]. Wasserberg aims for a broad brushstroke run-through at the end of the first week of her rehearsal process, so an early but rough blocking helps her actors to navigate their initial round-table discoveries of the first three days with a basic physical embodiment. Working through the first three scenes on their feet in four hours, Wasserberg encouraged the actors to 'leave the detail till later […] I repeat, let it be shit!' (Field Notes, 2018, l.378). In week one, there was not a unification of the acting process (in the sense of embodiment, experiencing or connecting), hence a lack of major breakthroughs, especially shared ones, as some actors were partially off-book such as Tylor and Melville, whilst others such as Banton remained with eyes tightly focussed on their scripts: a genuine perception through connection and interaction was not possible. Academic and founding director of Australian company Ranters, Raimondo Cortese, argues that actors need a 'super-awareness' (Cortese, 2019, p.255) through connections with their scene partners and, in order to do this, 'must learn to lose control in the moment to the point that the "scene" appears to be unfolding for the first time' (Cortese, 2019, p.258). Any shifts embodied in the *Close Quarters* rehearsal at this stage were more individual. As there was little connection to the other actor, such as witnessing Tylor working from a more youthful, action-centred approach, for example, they begin the process of merging themselves with their character's given circumstances, as opposed to

[26] Mitchell states that 'it is essential that actors are arranged on the stage so that the action, events and key story points are visible and well-focused for the audience […] Many rehearsal processes start with blocking: typically, the director and actor discuss where the character should enter and where they should sit, stand, jump and so on' (Mitchell, 2009, p.178-179).

connecting to their scene partners. It is no surprise there were few shared breakthroughs witnessed through Lens Three in this early stage of rehearsal, due to little genuine perception or connection between the actors.

5.1.4 FIXED AND FREE POLARITIES

Wasserberg worked on blocking between the polarity of 'fixed elements and free elements' (Johnston, 2005, p.24), as she gave her actors fixed entrance points and exit points, as well as some definite positioning in relation to furniture, and allowed them agency to work organically and on impulse within these fixed points. This skeletal 'organic blocking is the process of stimulating actors to image-making [where] actors discover dramatic action' (Hodge, 1994, p.74) and Wasserberg was giving 'a structure with elastic boundaries' (Merlin, 2016, p.129). This allowed her actors a confidence to concentrate on relationships and individual character arcs from the basic knowledge they were embracing from the table work. Theatre-making practice has evolved since 1921 when George Bernard Shaw suggested in his letter *The Art of Rehearsal* that the rehearsal period should be mainly about 'stage business' (Shaw, in West, 1958, p.155), whereby actors are taught the blocking and gestural language pre-decided by their director.

Akin to the spirit and philosophy (if not the letter) of Stanislavski's later work on Active Analysis, whereby actors 'generate many of their creative discoveries in a rehearsal room through their *bodies* [where actions] would stimulate complex psychological experiences' (Merlin, 2016, p.187), Wasserberg is implicitly allowing for actors to begin to create meaning themselves. Director Richard Maxwell of the New York City Players has a frame which the acting style and choices must keep within, either as *primary* or *secondary* acting tasks, with the primary tasks being

> responsive to the immediate material demands of the scene (fighting, delivering lines, following a sequence of movements); secondary tasks

> relate to the psychological and content-based activities unfolding in the fictional world of the play.
>
> (Harvie and Lavender, 2010, p.75)

Wasserberg stated in her pre-rehearsal interview her relationship between physical movements and psychological action:

> If you say to the actors, "don't worry, you can't get this wrong – it's a series of concrete tasks – say the words, walk around, pick up the thing you need to as the script tells you". And while they are working physically and the actor's brain is occupied with all that stuff, you also feed in other ideas such as "he's actually trying to tell her he's always loved her", and those chats happen naturally.
>
> (Wasserberg, 2018, l.312-317)

Observing Wasserberg allowing actors to organically connect to and with one another and make sense of their early discoveries psycho-physically on the rehearsal room floor, she was actively in the space during this early stage of putting an early physical shape on the scene, leading from the front and working out staging problems by sensing somatically, being in the action, with the cast in situ. Judging the proxemics (and thereby the character's relationships), the actor remained in charge of interpreting Wasserberg's psychological secondary tasks.

There were many moments of layering and building when oscillating between those polarities. Moments of recognition were occurring, rather than major breakthroughs and table work was starting to be embodied psycho-physically. When Scene Three was rehearsed for the first time in week one, Wasserberg gave a specific note relating to space and environment which affected behaviour, and was a moment of recognition. Their characters are on patrol in the open air and Wasserberg reminded them of the following given circumstance, utilising the idea of the secondary task:

WASSERBERG: Remember that they [the squaddies] are not wanting to be heard.

CAST: (*Nods*) Yeah, yeah (*Focusing on Wasserberg who is in the space*).

(Field Notes, 2018, l.415-416)

When replaying the scene, a bodily encoding of this note was evident as the actors used hushed voices and there was an organic sense of rising tension and stakes; bridging the mental reconnaissance recognitions towards a connected response between the actors. The actors were aware of this, using a dual consciousness manner, and were able to explicitly reflect on their previous run of this moment. Similarly, this embodiment occurred when putting a physical shape on this section of Scene Four:

FINDLAY: She's all intae me being an officer – Sandhurst route. High up officer.

CORMACK: Fuck up!

FINDLAY: Aye.

CORMACK: That's amazing!

(Bowen, 2018a, p.2)

The facts became embodied from the table work, as the actors discussed their character's support for one another. Wasserberg did not have to explicitly direct Melville (playing Davies) in this section for on hearing the news in the scene, Melville smiled warmly, with an awareness of her personal breakthrough and radiated an intensity of care towards Findlay. Davies and Findlay's relationship at this moment was clear to the actors, even at this early messy stage of rehearsing. The fixed polarity point at play here was the given circumstance, and the free polarity point was the environment the director had created for the actors to discover this themselves in the felt response of a moment, guided by the secondary psychological tasks.

5.1.5 AUDIENCE THINKING

The audience was often considered in Wasserberg's directorial choices, especially throughout the patrol scene: 'fan out when approaching the car as it makes a better stage picture for the audience' (Field Notes, 2018, l.437) she requested, as the company continued to organically block scenes in their first week, which Wasserberg termed the 'first draft' (Field Notes, 2018, l.440) of a scene. In response to a question from the actress playing Findlay, asking if she could stand up in a moment, Wasserberg replied in a way to continue to create an environment where actors can discover for themselves within the freedom and stated 'offer me something and I can always strip things away. Throw all the paint on the canvas' (Field Notes, 2018, l.441).

By day one of week three, a process was emerging whereby Wasserberg was staging bit to bit[27]; building movement transitions between scenes and roughly staging fights and military sequences as starting points for RC-Annie to work on in a later rehearsal. Allowing sections and scenes to flow and for actors to work impulsively, Wasserberg then followed up with notes and thoughts, with the actors re-running bits and building towards running bits of a scene together, until a first full draft of a scene organically presented itself. This became the pattern of working, with Wasserberg always watching intently, occasionally looking at her script, and often with a cup of tea in hand. A relaxed atmosphere was generated even though she was observing acutely, as the 'director needs to be fully alert and present in the very moment, as both director and actors try to figure out the depths and details of the situation in a direct encounter […] with the playtext' (Ostermeier, 2016, p.165). Whilst building, she asked the actors to mark their scripts for beats, pauses and tension-building moments, again building implicitly the *what* of a moment that she needed the actors to do, linking to

[27] Using the Stanislavskian notion of the 'bit', rather than a unit.

Alfreds's examination of the 'logic text' (Alfreds, 2010, p.196). He defines this as giving weight to the importance of the text's rhythm, and meaning that is woven into its punctuation, grammar and structure can be analysed and therefore embodied.

The frames (as introduced in 4.6 above) that Wasserberg wanted her actors to work within were introduced throughout the first week, as opposed to having been laid out explicitly on the morning of the first rehearsal. Carola Boehm discusses how in the arts, a wide-open approach (i.e. with no frame) can be problematic:

> If the road seems wide open, and there is a narrow path off it, we tend to continue our journey on the wide-open path. We are blocked from taking the narrow path by the openness of the wide road. (Boehm, 2009, p.3)

By narrowing the road to a path (i.e. by creating a frame), actors know where their focus needs to lie within a short and bounded rehearsal period of four weeks.

5.1.6 RELATIONSHIP CLARITY

Clarifying relationships between characters continued on the fourth day of week one and led to moments of recognition. The actress playing Findlay was initially listening to Sands's stories of interviewing Islamist terrorists in Scene Seven, by leaning back in her seat in the space, seated yet relaxed. Wasserberg articulated a verbal note prior to the second time playing the moment, offering 'you love this mental game of chess that Sands plays' (Field Notes, 2018, l.566), which aligns to Findlay's speed of thought processes which are rapid in the text. The actress nodded with many '"yeah, yeah's' (Field Notes, 2018, l.568) as she understood that her character's intellect would be attuned to Sands's stories. On replaying the scene, when Sands began her monologue, the actress, embodying Findlay then sat forwards, and listened, interested to the type of cerebral gameplay that

Findlay understands. This moment of recognition is not a major discovery, but aligns to the knowledge the actress already had about her character within the context of the scene. As soon as the directorial note was presented, she was aware of her breakthrough and embodied it.

5.1.7 PRACTICAL PROBLEMS TO SOLVE

Upon arrival in Sheffield in week three, the company ran Scenes One to Three using their final rehearsal draft (2018b), to establish the initial energy needed for the piece as actors: to know the rest moments, as well as the energy and control required to move from high-octane and dynamic movement sequences and transitions between scenes themselves. Wasserberg's need for the practical elements to come together was witnessed at this stage, as one of her methods as a director is 'solv[ing] all the practical problems' (Wasserberg, 2018, l.275) early in rehearsal.

Being presented with a new draft of the script at the start of week three, there was an obvious atmosphere of frustration in the rehearsal room. Any early discoveries in relation to practical needs, as well as psychological through-lines, were diluted within the constraints of having a new draft and having to learn new lines, (re)discover elements and (re)align new practicalities. The frustration of not being able to finesse many early decisionswas palpable, as there was cessation of the early embodiment as actors returned to a cerebral approach, reading through their new script. As they re-ran Scenes One to Three there was less flow within the scenes as they stopped more (whereas they were running these sections together) due to a lack of embodiment. In contrast, the practical elements of the transition sequences, practical gun holding and the shootings, remained fluid, as these had not altered textually. However, this setback was counter-balanced by a development in terms of dramaturgical specificity and development yet to be processed by the actors.

Interestingly, this means that there were few breakthroughs viewed through Lenses Two and Three when the company was working with draft 2018b from week three, and they returned to more Lens One recognition moments, as identified in Figures 16 and 17. Stern states that 'modern playwrights frequently refer to the way their texts have been altered and refashioned over rehearsal' (Stern, 2000, p.7). Wasserberg's task then became to align the actors' embryonic recognitions and responses to the dramatically-refashioned new draft, and to move them quickly into a place where they felt comfortable and secure to create a form, with opening night only two weeks away.

5.1.8 ACTORS' RECOGNITIONS WITHIN THEIR COMFORT ZONES

In the afternoon of the third day of week three, a rehearsal took place between Haughton-Shaw, the assistant director, and O'Reilly, examining Sands's speech 'I was on a base a few kilometres from Mogadishu' (Bowen, 2018b, p.50). Working on the new version of the speech, they turned to the rehearsal method of actioning, exploring transitive verbs for each thought[28]. They sat opposite each other across a small desk in the middle of the rehearsal room, locked into the specificity of the exercise. Haughton-Shaw sat cross legged, pen in hand, eyeball-to-eyeball with O'Reilly. In turn, O'Reilly talked directly to Haughton-Shaw when delivering her lines. This method of actioning[29] resonated for O'Reilly (See Figure 10, below). She enjoyed it (and told me so anecdotally) and at the end of the rehearsal stated to Haughton-Shaw, 'lots of that is really working' (Field Notes, 2018, l.1330). Catherine Alexander, Associate Director of Complicité, believes in the importance of 'the establishment of a shared vocabulary' (Alexander, in Warren-Fisher, 2010, p.61) in the rehearsal room. In this instance, O'Reilly's

[28] A thought is a complete clause, the end of which is highlighted by a full stop, exclamation or question mark.

[29] Actioning is the assigning of a transitive verb (e.g. 'to attack') to each thought, in order to change the other characters, thought to thought. Originating as an explicit rehearsal exercise by director Max Stafford-Clark, it has its roots in the Stanislavskian tradition.

rehearsal vocabulary aligned with the assistant director's cerebral approach, leading to moments of recognition. There was no evidence of explicitly creating a shared rehearsal vocabulary throughout *Close Quarters* rehearsals, but there was a consistent and tacit way of working, in the form of a repeated approach to reading a scene, discussing a scene, running a scene, followed by director's notes, as outlined.

Linking this to how humans adjust to a new environment is at the heart of Bordieu's (1977) concept of *habitus*. Rossmanith (2006) frames this as when the link between the field (i.e. the rehearsal) and the company member's habitus (their embodied/tacit way of 'being', from their training, process, methodology, and actions) is united, then there is an intuition or something being right. This could be called an 'aha' moment as 'knowledge is not only manifested propositionally but also in the form of embodied knowledge' (Rossmanith, 2003, p.53) and that 'when they produced the right feelings and the right results – the practitioners were, to an extent, in a state of *ecstasis*[30] where their work was invisible then simply because the process disappears into its use' (Rossmanith, 2003, p.200). Here, O'Reilly's habitus merged with the field and an ease occurred, as she encountered and was aware of several moments of recognition, and wrote these choices in her script (Figure 10).

The recognition moments for O'Reilly had not suddenly come from the sky, thunderbolt-like, but as 'a dormant thought, feeling, or response [that] suddenly re-emerges, preparing us to meet the world in all its turmoil' (Sidiropoulou, 2019, p.5). The dormant thought was unlocked and recognised by the actor through the work of questioning and probing, until there was a shared moment of 'rightness' with a verb chosen using a shared rehearsal vocabulary. Verification of the meaningfulness of the breakthrough came in the form of feedback from Haughton-Shaw as she stated 'there's more stakes in the storytelling' (Field Notes, 2018, l.1336). The thought

[30] *Ecstasis* is described by Rossmanith as the 'process of using the body as an instrument mak[ing] the body invisible or transparent' (Rossmanith, 2002, p.200). Rossmanith is the first academic to link embodiment to discovery.

changes became more nuanced, and this was heard in the tone in O'Reilly's vocal quality. Yet as Wasserberg (the final arbitrator of how meaningful a choice is) was away from rehearsals at a press launch, it was difficult to immediately sense what choices might remain when playing this in the context of the scene. What was happening, however, was the importance for the actress to align her character development and embodying of the given circumstances to a rehearsal method that she was comfortable and secure within.

5.1.9 LETTING GO AND NEW STORIES

Following the warm-up on the fourth day of week three, Wasserberg began working through the Prologue, and the actress playing Findlay began to embody the notes and ideas of the previous few weeks and was now 'letting go' (Demidov 2016, p.553). As the actress embodied ideas and united this with the previous week's work on the scene, she told Findlay's story with an energy and a sharpness not seen before: there was specificity in relation to contacting the creatives and stage management in the rehearsal room as an 'audience', eyeball-to-eyeball. Also connecting with the other characters on the stage, the actress gave a sense of her relationship to each of them. As was the pattern by that stage of rehearsals, Wasserberg allowed the scene to run and then gave notes. It was during the notes session that Findlay had a moment of recognition, as Wasserberg referred her to the punctuation in the text (returning again to Alfreds's theory of logic text), as she aimed to find the gear-changes in the speech, as when the thought changes occurred, Wasserberg wanted her to start a 'new story' (Field Notes, 2018, l.1380). A new section of speech therefore had a fundamentally different quality to the section preceding it.

'Just remember the audience has just sat down and half their brains are in the car park, so you need to walk them through it' (Field Notes, 2018, l.1381-1382) Wasserberg joked as she worked on this section, but the

meaning was important: pull the audience into the story to ensure clarity and specificity. This encouraged the actor's progression in a supportive environment, stating that her work was 'pretty extraordinary – shall we do it again?' (Field Notes, 2018, l.1384). The notion of the audience being specifically taken on a journey as required by the text and the production is clear for director Anne Bogart, who refers to the audience as a friend: you should 'imagine planning a surprise birthday party for a friend […]. You are structuring a journey for another person through direct empathy and feeling' (Bogart, 2001, p.5). Wasserberg was needing to bring her audience into both the theatre and then the story, and saw the audience as the production's friend, who needed to be eased into the world of the production. As Brook states, 'I don't think you can work in the theatre without loving and respecting your audience' (Brook, THM/452/11/9/1). As the actress playing Findlay replayed the speech, the turning points (story shifts) became clearer across thoughts in the narration, especially between the following lines:

> So. No more USA in N-A-T-O.
>
> Our first tour of duty, we were fresh out of training.
>
> (Bowen, 2018b, p.2)

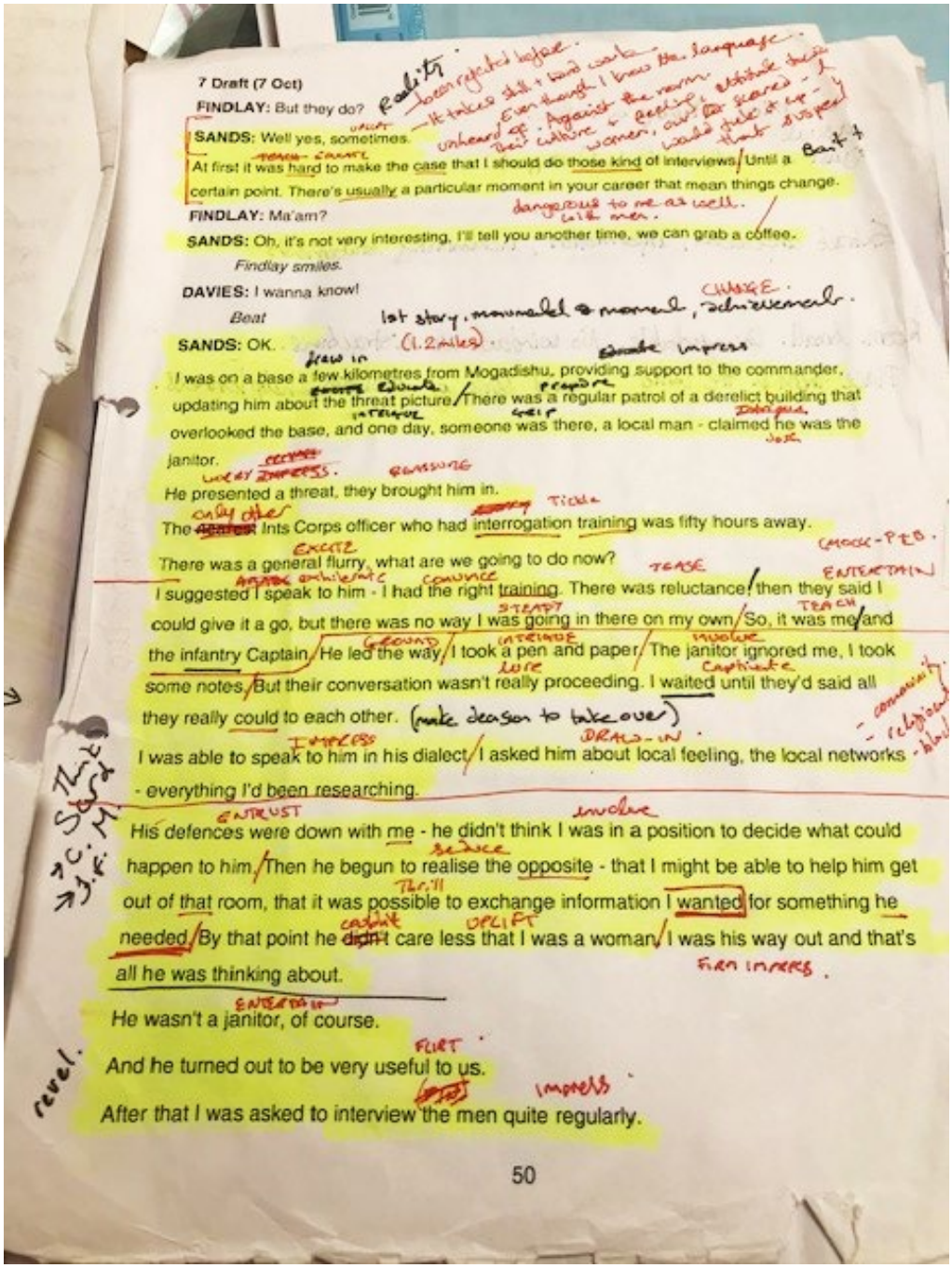


Figure 10: O'Reilly's actioned script, which clearly illustrates her transitive verbs in red ink throughout. (Reproduced with permission from Kathryn O'Reilly)

Witnessing a clarity between the NATO thought and the next thought, the actress looked for reassurance and a verification check from the director during the speech on these turning points, glancing at Wasserberg occasionally. Wasserberg confirmed that she had embodied these notes of recognition through a big smile and gave her a non-verbal thumbs up during delivery.

5.1.10 CLARITY OF STORY

Also on the fourth day of week three, the cast moved back to the first scene, where I witnessed a layering onto previous embodied work, which Crawford terms the 'road runner theory' where an actor is 'to pursue one thing at a time' (Crawford, 2011, p.140). Now off-book, with some minor paraphrasing, a form began to emerge as audience thinking continued. Wasserberg stated in relation to the patrol rehearsal that she 'didn't understand that – it tells a weird story […] can we be clearer?' (Field Notes, 2018, l.1397). She added further detail by offering Banton a note to remember that the platoon's rehearsal in the scene is

> time number eight! It pushes a bit more and you're basically going (*Shouting*) you're still doing it, this is your last chance to get it right. AGAIN. So, it feels like – fuck – so, when there's a sense of finally nailing it you've been doing it, doing it, and doing it.
>
> (Field Notes, 2018, l.1399-1402)

When the scene was replayed, Banton had clearly embodied this imagined circumstance as his vocal energy had a sharpness as he ordered the squad: 'Cormack you're off by about 30 degrees. Adjust yourself' (Bowen, 2018b, p.5), and felt *as if it was* the eighth time he had said this to the platoon. It raised the stakes and had a knock-on effect to the other actors playing the squaddies, who wanted to please their Sergeant as a result. Banton confirmed how important this directorial offer was, stating 'once she told me

that it just worked for me – it seemed to make a lot of sense which I was really thankful for' (Banton, 2018, 55).

5.1.11 PSYCHOLOGICAL NEED COUPLED WITH THE PHYSICAL TASK

Staying with the fourth day of week three, Wasserberg introduced a new layer as, after four days living with the new draft, the actors had been able to learn their lines in the evenings and as a result were able to communicate with each other in a more sustained manner. Now having entered the middle period of rehearsals, Wasserberg began layering in some psychological needs as they became confident with their physical tasks and, as director Michael Bloom states, the company

> spen[t] longer periods on each scene to investigate key moments and [to] dig deeper for the ambiguities […] Let[ting] actors run […] a scene, to begin to capture the ebb and flow.
>
> (Bloom, 2001, p.151)

A strong example of this emerged with the actor playing Findlay having a recognition moment in relation to a psycho-physical note. When Private Findlay offers information to Captain Sands in Scene One, Wasserberg was keen for the actress to 'rattle off that information. You enjoy it' (Field Notes, 2018, l.1414). Recognising this understanding, she nodded and smiled and as scene was replayed, and had a genuine sense of enjoyment in her own abilities (as previously she played arrogantly 'showing off' as the psychological task), since one of Findlay's character's qualities is having a photographic memory. This impulsive 'in the moment' recognition was embodied in the next run through of the scene as she played enjoyment that didn't radiate as selfishness.

A recognition moment occurred for Wasserberg on this day, as she believed that Scene Two (having previously been played in a fairly static way) needed movement, and more physical activity, but initially there was

no concrete idea to embrace this. Jones, the designer, walked serendipitously into the rehearsal room at this point and suggested that the activity could be Adeyemi sorting ammunition into packs for the young Privates which means there's a 'threat of death if it's ammo – they're [the squaddies] only 20 years old' (Field Notes, 2018, l.1488). Wasserberg was visibly enthused, jumped off her seat and started to find elements that could work for this section. Jones's thinking was to create a visual metaphor, having a young Sergeant counting out ammunition, which would impact on the overall scene from a practical point of view also, as 'the design informed their acting and the acting informed the design' (Brown and Wiese, 2016, p.101). Wasserberg had wanted this scene to be more 'rooted [in action otherwise] it's just discussing the ideas of the play' (Field Notes, 2018, l.1494) and semiotically it created a danger, juxtaposing the ammunition with the youth of the Sergeant. This scenographic choice allowed for a strong visual metaphor to work alongside a playable scene where characters still operated within and responded to their world without having to play an idea explicitly. This choice stayed with the production and Jones articulated the importance of this:

MARSDEN: Scenographer Pamela Howard talks about defining scenography as including the actor. I noticed a moment in rehearsal where you introduced the idea of the bullets being part of a scene, being counted by Sergeant Adeyemi.

JONES: Yes, and I need to pursue that further. One of the notes Kate and I need to discuss is how we sharpen and rethink that particular scene in terms of the action and find a way to emphasising that danger. That's a nice example of a visual signifier on a small scale. You can have operatic-scale signifiers such as the large dock doors opening, but you're looking for small details

having a huge amount of weight that can evolve from rehearsals.

(Jones, 2018, l.197 - 204)

5.1.12 RECOGNITION MOMENTS PRIOR TO TECHNICAL REHEARSALS

The final notable recognition moments happened on the last rehearsal day on Friday of week four, prior to the company taking up residence in the Studio for technical rehearsal. The previous day had been a final run-through for the Artistic Director of Sheffield Theatres, Robert Hastie[31], and his notes were vicariously given by Wasserberg. The acting company, Haughton-Shaw, and Wasserberg sat democratically on the floor in a circle for notes following the ritual of the warm-up. Wasserberg began with supportive praise stating that she was 'proud of [you] and the work. We've got something special here' (Field Notes, 2018, l.1719), which bookended the early stages of rehearsal where she radiated support and encouragement.

With scripts, notebooks, and pencils in hand, the actors wrote down Hastie's notes, which concentrated on spatial demands that the architecture of the studio places upon the actor. Wasserberg informed the actors that the 'studio space is deceptive; it plays intimately but Rob [Hastie] wants to remind you that the ceiling is high: clarity and audibility is important' (Field Notes, 2018, l.1723). Hastie also wished for actors to sustain verbal clarity within their natural accents, some also received notes on the military physical language of formality-versus-relaxation, within the context of the scenes (Hastie was a cadet when younger and so spoke from experience), and that the strength of the play resides in its fabric as an intense workplace drama. Hastie also wanted to see the story beats sharpened in Scene Three with the clarity of the shooting, ensuring that it looked as though Cormack is

[31] Often the final rehearsal room run in British theatre-making is in front of the Artistic Director of the venue the production is being staged at. The Artistic Director then gives their notes to the production's director, who disseminates these to the cast.

further away than the rest of the platoon when she goes to 'rescue' the baby. Tylor, in a heightened awareness, immediately exclaimed 'yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah' (Field Notes, 2018, l.1729), with bright eyes and a smile: she wanted to ensure that this scene had a clear physical story, as she carries the baton of the scene. This moment of discovery ignited a clarity for Tylor.

Still worried that Findlay's 'know-it-all' answers in Scene Two had returned to being less about enjoying her own intelligence and more about playing an arrogance, Wasserberg recounted a personal story of herself to illustrate this point. The actress playing Findlay had a moment of recognition following this offer:

> Some people will answer all the questions. I was saying to Cat[riona Craig] there's a certain type of personality that simultaneously wants to be liked and part of a gang, and will only ever be really happy if they are in charge, because they know the answers and they have to say them. I know this as it's literally who I am. I desperately want everyone to like me, but actually I'm only really happy if I'm in charge of the group! (*Laughter*) When I was at school I was always unhappy as I was always doing this (*Putting hand up*) and I was unpopular as I was always putting my hand up and couldn't keep my fucking mouth shut, and that's Findlay […] you can't help it! She can't quite fit in – erm – she can't pretend she doesn't know the answer when she does.
>
> (Field Notes, 2018, l.1735-1744)

The actress playing Findlay nodded often during the above personal story and scribbled this in her script. When the scene was reworked, instead of having the intention to show off through her lines, the actress found an inner tension between wanting to speak all the time and trying not to take over: with this lack of hubris, the scene was sensed to be working as this note was not repeated.

The overall run-through notes saw moments of recognition from the other actors, who seemed to already know the points being raised but at this later stage of rehearsals, there had been so much exploration and idea generation, that Wasserberg took them back to dramaturgical fundamentals. For example, she reminded them of the action's timeframe. Scene Three takes places at 23.45, and Wasserberg stated 'remember how long they've been up' (Field Notes, 2018, l.1751) pointing at the timeline on the wall. She offered imagined circumstances to make this point: 'Their feet are cold and they've got hours left. They've covered miles, this is why they talk shit!' (Field Notes, 2018, l.1753). The actors wrote this down, nodded and smiled. When the scene was replayed, the recognition of this began to be embodied as they played the scene soporifically, trying to keep awake and alert. It became an important given circumstance that remained when returning to see the production. It was clear that this was explored as a question at the heart of the play: how attuned are the infantry to make a considered and reasoned response if they are exhausted?

5.2 LENS TWO: 'AHA' – AN INDIVIDUAL DISCOVERY MOMENT BY AN ACTOR OR DIRECTOR

The second lens through which a breakthrough is viewed is where something 'new' is happening and there is a discovery, rather than a recognition of something previously understood or lying dormant. The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines a discovery as 'the action of discovering. Verb. 1. Find something unexpectedly in the course of a search. 2. Gain knowledge about or become aware of' (1989, IV, p.753), which often accrues from the smaller moments of learning that have taken place through lens one above.

Several breakthroughs viewed through Lens Two were triggered by the director asking a question (which aligns to Longhurst's 2010 study) enabling a breakthrough moment to happen. This allowed for a movement

forward in the rehearsal process, particularly for an actor in developing a character's journey within the given circumstances of a scene. These individual moments manifested themselves more in the early-to-mid-stages of the rehearsal process, as the actors built upon their sub-rehearsal work, and springboarded out from their individual moments of recognition, as identified in Figure 11.

5.2.1 AN IMAGINED BACKSTORY: MOTHERS AND FATHERS

The first individual discovery moment occurred for Dylan Wood in relation to his character Armstrong on day two of week one. In my previous professional experience, when assisting Chris Monks on *Sweeney Todd* (New Vic Theatre, Staffordshire, 2000), he spent individual time with each actor, discussing and building the givens and any back story of the character. However, Wasserberg undertakes character creation collectively, rather than separately, with everybody during the round-table work. An open, egalitarian rehearsal room meant there were no secrets as the company built their work as an ensemble. Wasserberg stated to Wood after reading Scene Three:

> My theory about Armstrong is that his dad's in the army and he's raised by a woman. He wants to be macho but his views are formed by the women – he's been pampered and adored and got respect for women. But his dad was a bit of a bastard. He lived in that stretch point and is secretly a feminist.
>
> (Field Notes, 2018, l.212-215)

Wood sat forward, nodded, smiled and agreed verbally. This breakthrough moment for Wood was confirmed by all of the company nodding and humming in agreement, and verified by Wood in his post-rehearsal interview:

> That was a little puzzle that I had just missed […] Kate really helped me there. I did draw on that a lot. I drew on the fact that he is

> obviously young; he's 20 years old and being brought up by women was [a great note]. He's now in the army and, all stemming from that direction that Kate gave me, I played on the fact that he's there to prove a point as he's insecure having been bought up by women and he wants to show a macho-ness. That direction didn't leave me. I was pulling on bits of that all the time.
>
> (Wood, 2019, l.37-45)

Wood also commented that he drew further inspiration from that note when his character had stepped out of line in the attempted kiss of Cormack of Scene Six; and the meaningfulness of that moment is vital to the ripple effects it had for Wood across the whole play.

During re-reading Scene Four on day two of week one, there was much laughter from the cast as they bridged Wasserberg's imagined backstory ideas of Armstrong being raised by women when they heard his dialogue in reference to how he responds to a female superior officer:

> ARMSTRONG: Ach, right, you've got me, it's cos it stops us thinking like our Mammies are telling us off. Female like her up there, makes us feel like wee people again, all vulnerable – don't be cross Mammy. But say they're a ride and then they're no yer Mammy anymore.
>
> (Bowen, 2018a, p.21)

The breakthrough had ripples for Wood and the whole cast. After this was delivered, there was this short interchange:

> WOOD: Poor guy
>
> WASSERBERG: Yes! Get on his side.
>
> (Field Notes, 2018, l.225-226)

As Demidov states, 'take an evil person, for example, he never considers himself evil; on the contrary he's the nice one, and everyone else around him is a scoundrel' (Demidov, 2016, p.506). Here is a prime and concrete example of Wood beginning to work within Wasserberg's frame of actors not having to defend their characters, but to be their champion, as laid out in Chapter 4. Wasserberg continually brought her frames into the room incrementally, as opposed to setting them all up on day one, where actors cannot take everything in, due to the enormous amount of information presented.

On day three of week one, the actors began to move this scene onto its feet and the breakthrough note for Wood married with the physicalisation of the scene itself, as he now defended his relationship with his mother strongly and championed Armstrong's position. Melville, as Davies, physically played with Armstrong when she teased him about his mum on the line 'I met ya Ma' (Bowen, 2018a, p.21), embodying the cerebral round-table work of day three by moving impulsively towards Armstrong and suddenly ruffling his hair. When beginning work on Scene Four, there is also a sense of embodied knowledge in relation to Armstrong with his line:

ARMSTRONG: Back off, Davies.

(Bowen, 2018a, p.21)

Here, he refers to Davies teasing him as she had met Armstrong's mother at the passing out parade. The second day of the rehearsal saw Wasserberg explicitly wanting Wood to understand his character's relationship to his mother, and get into his shoes. One rehearsal day later, and this was understood with a clarity of playing as a tense moment vocally and physically was witnessed as Wood delivered the above line. The ownership had moved from the director to the actor a mere three days into the rehearsal process and Wasserberg implicitly drew on her pre-rehearsal thinking as opposed to referring explicitly to any notes. This breakthrough's impact remained throughout rehearsal and was seen through his performance.

5.2.2 PLAY THE SITUATION, NOT THE CHARACTER

Destabilising any presupposition that discoveries only occur following a realisation, a discovery moment for Melville occurred very early during the embryonic round table work of week one, day two as she realised the importance of the situation for her in relation to the given circumstances:

> MELVILLE: How much of a big deal is this [the inciting incident]?
>
> BOWEN: Hmmm?
>
> HAUGHTON-SHAW: It's a domino effect
>
> WASSERBERG: There could be a land grab, the Russians could claim a town to "keep it safe". It's a destabilisation of the geo-political Estonian issue.
>
> *There are nods around the room.*
>
> (Field Notes, 2018, l.272 - 277)

From this stage direction, Melville became acutely aware of how this may play out in her thinking for Scenes Six and Seven, which concentrate on the build-up to the second patrol along the border, as Bowen reminded the cast that they are wanting 'to fight' (Field Notes, 2018, l.280). In her post-rehearsal interview, Melville was keen to point out that 'this really helped fuel the play and raise the stakes. It was great to know how much of a big deal this is. It helped the danger and excitement of the play' (Melville, 2018, l.63-64). This one moment, whilst a breakthrough for Melville, oscillated the stakes of Scene Three when the platoon is on patrol, becoming a foundation stone, which she was able to build upon. In a similar way, American acting tutor Robert Cohen argues for 'alignment' (Cohen, 2013, p.10), whereby all the plates of character-building come from aligning the structure of the plates, from getting the goal of the scene right. This is useful here, where 'the bottom plate is the character's pursuit of a *goal* (or *objective* or *intention*

or *want*, depending on the actor's terminology) within her immediate situation.' (Cohen, 2013, p.3). If the bottom plate (the intention) is placed correctly, everything else can be built on top, and discoveries are made.

5.2.3 SATISFACTION UPON DISCOVERING

Csíkszentmihályi's notion of satisfaction that manifests itself in an 'aha' moment presented itself in an individual discovery moment during day three of week one. When reading Scene Nine for the first time, round-table, Tylor stated that 'the more the play goes on, I've noticed that Cormack keeps her mouth shut. I keep my mouth shut – I know what to do. (*Pause – Actress's eyes open, and she smiles*) I kinda like that!' (Field Notes, 2018, l.353-355). This was a discovery that was personal from her own synthesising, as opposed to growing from a directorial trigger. Tylor commented on this as important for her in relation to the age of the character:

> TYLOR: When you're playing a character you have to trick yourself into liking them – even if you don't like what they say or do. Then when I said that I thought "she knows what's going on" and I wanted her and was imprinting that on her. But later as it went on, and it goes back to the age thing, but she keeps her mouth shut because she's good at listening, but she doesn't have a fucking clue about what to say.
>
> MARSDEN: Like a lack of emotional intelligence?
>
> TYLOR: Yeah, and insecurity.
>
> (Tylor, 2018, l.94-100)

Aligning herself to the character, in the sense of being the character's guardian and getting on her side (within Wasserberg's frame), a merging of self with character was beginning to occur, whereby there's a 'creative

merger between the character and the actor's individuality' (Demidiov, 2016, p.507). The discovery's impact gave the actor agency to merge further, and was therefore meaningful for her process and, therefore, ultimately the production.

On the Thursday of week one, Wasserberg examined Scene Six on its feet and continued to draft a physical blocking and shape of the section. This scene focuses on a pivotal turning point between Sands and Findlay:

> SANDS: Whatever you're putting up with right now – it doesn't happen in the intelligence Corps. In my Corps.
>
> FINDLAY: No?
>
> SANDS: Someone like you would be truly welcomed.
>
> FINDLAY: Whit?
>
> (Bowen, 2018a, p.28)

Wasserberg bought the actors close to her and instructed 'try not to end-game it[32]; allow your thought that she should be at Sandhurst to look like it's happening to you in the scene' (Field Notes, 2018, l.508). O'Reilly had a breakthrough with an immediate positive verbal 'Oh, OK' (Field Notes, 2018, l.509). O'Reilly affirmed:

> that note was important to me – it wasn't premeditated. If she enters the scene and knows how she's going to do this then that's a different character. With this Sands is inspired by her [Findlay] in the moment and it's exciting when your character has realisations in the moment instead of pre-meditating. It felt genuinely that she cares for her. It feels far more exciting and alive if your character's affected in the moment – there and then – mentally, physically, spiritually,

[32] 'End-gaming' is a colloquial phrase in acting, whereby actors play an end result. For example, an actor playing Romeo may 'end-game' that he is going to die (as fated) but the *character* can only be in the moment, whereas the *actor* knows the 'end point' of their character's journey.

emotionally – whatever, and that is a driving force for the next line, action or behaviour. It feels really alive, doesn't it?

(O'Reilly, 2018, l.61-69)

Running this section again, this note became embodied as I witnessed O'Reilly orientating herself to Findlay in the moment, being physically still, perceiving, listening and sensing. This led to a reaction from Findlay, rather than playing any pre-determined end game result. The blocking manifested organically, as 'actors can already begin developing blocking during the first phase of rehearsals' (Norrthon, 2019, p.176) and the actor/characters were embracing 'dynamic listening' (Merlin, 2010, p.97) with one another, even during this early stage of rehearsals. This breakthrough also allowed for a sense of letting go therefore, as the actress had enough context to genuinely perceive what was occurring in the moment, and engage with the immediate circumstances.

There was also a breakthrough on this day for the actress playing Findlay, relating to the emotional heartbeat of the play which, in turn, is related to the play's genre. Findlay's second soliloquy to the audience concerns whether she had shot a civilian farmer or not. Initially this was played by the actress *sans* emotion. The director reminded the actress that in a soliloquy there's 'no mask with the audience […] the joy of a memory frame is that you can reveal what you think and feel' (Field Notes, 2018, l.515). Wasserberg allowed them to play the scene leading into the monologue three times, and each time the actress found emotional shifts delivering the soliloquy, emotion to rush in from the subtext of the moment of 'did I kill a civilian?', whilst simultaneously building her physical armoury when asking, 'did the Russians create propaganda?' The actress had a moment of satisfaction, smiling at the breakthrough:

FINDLAY: The drop of doubt is toxic in me – it lingers.

WASSERBERG: The rawness is a great place to start.

(Field Notes, 2018, l.521-522)

Witnessing the director at work here, the perception was that she wanted to push the actress further, as she was breaking through by layering the emotional arc that the memory play afforded, giving a sense of dramatic realism and truth. Playing the scene three times following the directorial suggestion allowed Findlay to embody some of this knowledge as she merged self with character. Wasserberg was alive to the possibilities of what was happening for the actress in the moment, as 'directing should be responding and being open and attentive to the impulses generated by the material' (Ostermeier, 2016, p.178). Responding to and building from individual moments of recognition did lead to individual discovery breakthroughs (although as discussed this is not a pre-requisite), identified in the satisfaction an individual displayed when it occurred. The satisfaction for O'Reilly (building from 5.1.9's recognition breakthroughs of Scene Seven), when delivering Sands's story of interviewing the Islamist militants was palpable:

> SANDS: But they still underestimate you, on a cellular level.
>
> So yes, at first it was hard to make the case [as a woman] to be part of a battle group. Until a certain point. There's usually a certain interview in your career that means you can't be side-lined anymore.
>
> (Bowen, 2018a, p.39)

Initially, O'Reilly played the scene almost apologetically and Wasserberg gave a cue note that 'this is a boast, rather than an admission […] [You're saying to the women of the platoon] being a woman is your strength' (Field Notes, 2018, l.581-583). O'Reilly responded with a confident, loud and quick retort: 'Oh yes – I see, OK, cool, yeah, yeah' (Field Notes, 2018, l.583-584). Playing the scene a third time, O'Reilly embodied both a strength and a defiance vocally and physically and, sitting forward, wanted to psychologically change the Privates (both men and women) in the scene. She knew she was doing this, as her dual consciousness technique was at

work, and, in her interview, O'Reilly refers several times to her conscious decision-making, in this scene, discussing that 'I held onto the relaxed for a while, but later found a boundary'. (O'Reilly, 2018, l.132). This was not only in the lines above, but through the rest of the speech until her character's exit, noticeably on the lines:

> Most twenty-two-year-olds are wanking to a manky poster of Taylor Swift and working out how they'll be able to afford new trainers.
>
> You can march for seven hours then fight
>
> You're gonna be fine.
>
> (Bowen, 2018a, p.40)

Figure 10 identifies verbs such as 'tickle' and 'excite' from her early recognition moments, yet O'Reilly verified that a change occurred in that rehearsal:

> When I started on that speech it was about entertaining, but to do justice and have an effect on the others. I remember when there were times when I did that speech when I could hear a pin drop in that theatre. I thought, "wow, this is exciting". If you're entertaining it takes away from the powerful effect you want to have. This isn't a one-night story, this is something she got through but changed her career. Their stories aren't career changing. They are drunken stories we all tell. I took all the entertaining out of it.
>
> (O'Reilly 2018, l.138-143)

The other actor/characters listened and sat forward as the scene was replayed: they were changed by O'Reilly's delivery. Her breakthrough had a ripple effect on playing the clarity of the scene, all triggered from Wasserberg's note, created meaning for O'Reilly's process and the wider context of the enormity of women being on the frontline of war, and the mindset changes the military has had to make.

5.2.4 A BREAKTHROUGH HERE LEADS TO A BREAKTHROUGH THERE

Two individual breakthroughs occurred when working on day one of week two on the section in Scene Two between Sergeant Adeyemi and Captain Sands. Firstly, a conversation regarding whether Sands places herself psychologically on the same page as the female Privates – including an extended conversation which resulted in the line '*their* bodies are fundamentally different' being replaced with '*our* bodies are fundamentally different' (Bowen, 2018a, p.11), placing Sands on a biological equal footing with the females. As O'Reilly states,

> Sands was using tactics to get him on side. Kate [Wasserberg] said to me that there's no one that they respect more than him – in my notes in my script I put "I see myself in all of them" – she sees herself in all of those women and has their interests at heart.
>
> (O'Reilly, 2018, l.78-80)

Figure 11 identifies O'Reilly's script notes on this section. That breakthrough had meaning for O'Reilly; the note was written in her script, and was able to remind her to activate this imaginatively. This also became the foundation stone for a preceding moment when O'Reilly had a discovery breakthrough returning to Scene Seven:

WASSERBERG:	I felt like that you guys are definitely not friends, no?
O'REILLY:	Yeah.
WASSERBERG:	It really makes sense later when you're like, "tell a night-out story, and talk about how male you are."
O'REILLY:	Yeah, yeah. (*Nodding and smiling with real warmth*)
WASSERBERG:	It stops being generalised jollying, it's a tactic.

(Field Notes, 2018, l.679-684)

This breakthrough had a boomerang effect in return for the director. The following conversation took place when the company were debating why Adeyemi is so specific in his details of the offstage males bullying the females:

O'REILLY: I think that's good as [Adeyemi] is trying to carry me… I don't know. So, I think…

WASSERBERG: So, you're like ["come on"].

O'REILLY: So, so, in that moment I can tell he's lying…

WASSERBERG: So that's a lie?

O'REILLY: Yeah.

WASSERBERG: (*Pauses and smiles*) Nice.

O'REILLY: Yeah.

WASSERBERG: (*Drawn out*) Nice.

(Field Notes, 2018, l.689-697)

Adeyemi was lying in order to oppress the female squaddies. This is a strong example of Crawford's Road Runner Theory of 5.1.10, where layering was taking place. Wasserberg did not wish to explore the military aspects, but to read the scene to 'let the relationships land and find little details' (Field Notes, 2018, l.701). This layering added texture and depth to the scene as it was read through and played twice: the scene's focus on their relationship sharpened, rather than being about military verisimilitude in the mess.

Scene One sees Adeyemi leading a rehearsal for a patrol. Adeyemi's superior Sands watches him leading the troops and his awareness of her is apparent. Wasserberg had a personal breakthrough when O'Reilly queried the meaning of her line 'I want to take it really slowly in the forested area' (Bowen, 2018a, p.4), when she steps in and takes over from Adeyemi:

WASSERBERG: There's a tension of two people [Sands and Adeyemi] being in charge…

O'REILLY: I'm wondering whether the rehearsal is for the forest area or before the forested area?

WASSERBERG Ahhhhhh… (*Louder*) that's nice!

O'REILLY: This is great here, now.

WASSERBERG: But when you're there. Yeah that's nice, that's nice.

(Field Notes, 2018, l.710-715)

Wasserberg had a discovery moment of a new imagined circumstance; that the patrol's rehearsal's stakes were higher, as they were actually in the forested area in which they would eventually come under fire. Wasserberg's approval of the discovery meant it was meaningful for the production and each re-reading allowed for a deeper embodiment of the new knowledge. There was a stronger vocal harshness from Bolton who ordered his platoon more forcefully from the start of his orders: 'Too slow, Armstrong. Much too slow' (Bowen, 2018a, p.4), as the privates had rehearsed the drill several times and were letting Adeyemi down in front of his superior. The scene was speedier and sharper in tone. Wasserberg introduced another frame, keen to remind her actors to make eye contact in these military scenes, even though they may not have in reality, as 'in the interests of theatre and the stage [it's] only interesting when we look into [each] other's eyes, otherwise it's a play where nobody looks at anyone else!' (Field Notes, 2018, l.723). This added to finding the production's relative theatrical truth, as opposed to military verisimilitude.

5.2.5 NOT MAGIC BUT WORK

Much of the morning of week two, day three was spent sharpening the form of the production, adding specificity to Scene Four's physical

activity. Wasserberg began by apologising for her directorial approach the previous day, self-deprecatingly: 'today I'll be a better director, I felt I left you paddling yesterday' (Field Notes, 2018, l.860). There were 'headshakes and confused looks: 'No,' stated Melville, and Wood laughed, saying 'I thought yesterday was a good day' (Field Notes, 2018, l.862). Tylor supported Wasserberg observing acutely: 'It's a difficult scene to crack. It's not a blame thing' (Field Notes, 2018, l.863). Yet Wasserberg was playing strategically; she felt had not made sufficient progress the previous day: her humble tone was to allow actors to recalibrate in a relaxed atmosphere as

> dialogue between director and actor is probably characterised as strategic rather than honest […] The centrality of the director, the casting of their will and their personality across the room, the infection of their manner into every nuance of industrial process and artistic venturing [is] the over-arching context in which actors experience anything at all in rehearsal.
>
> (Crawford, 2015, p.45)

Theatre creation is therefore certainly 'not magic but work' (McAuley, 2015, p.xviii). As well as layers being unearthed, adding depth and meaning to each moment within the scenes, Wasserberg was concurrently strategically working to construct a collegiate rehearsal atmosphere, following a lull in the previous day's atmosphere and energy. Yet the field notes do not suggest a worthless day; there was one realisation moment, one discovery moment, and one 'wow' moment. Wasserberg therefore aimed to overcome any previous deficiencies she had felt in the process by setting a new frame in the spirit of bringing something new to the room. She asked her actors to play Scene Five's recounting of the incidents of Scene Three, but to 'flavour it with emotions of the moment' (Field Notes, 2018, l.865) and 'infect each other with the story, even if you're in your own bit' (Field Notes, 2018, l.867). After the actors had read through the scene, Wasserberg led an extended twenty-five-minute notes session. The actors listened intently, writing notes in their scripts (Figure 12) and asked questions for clarity.

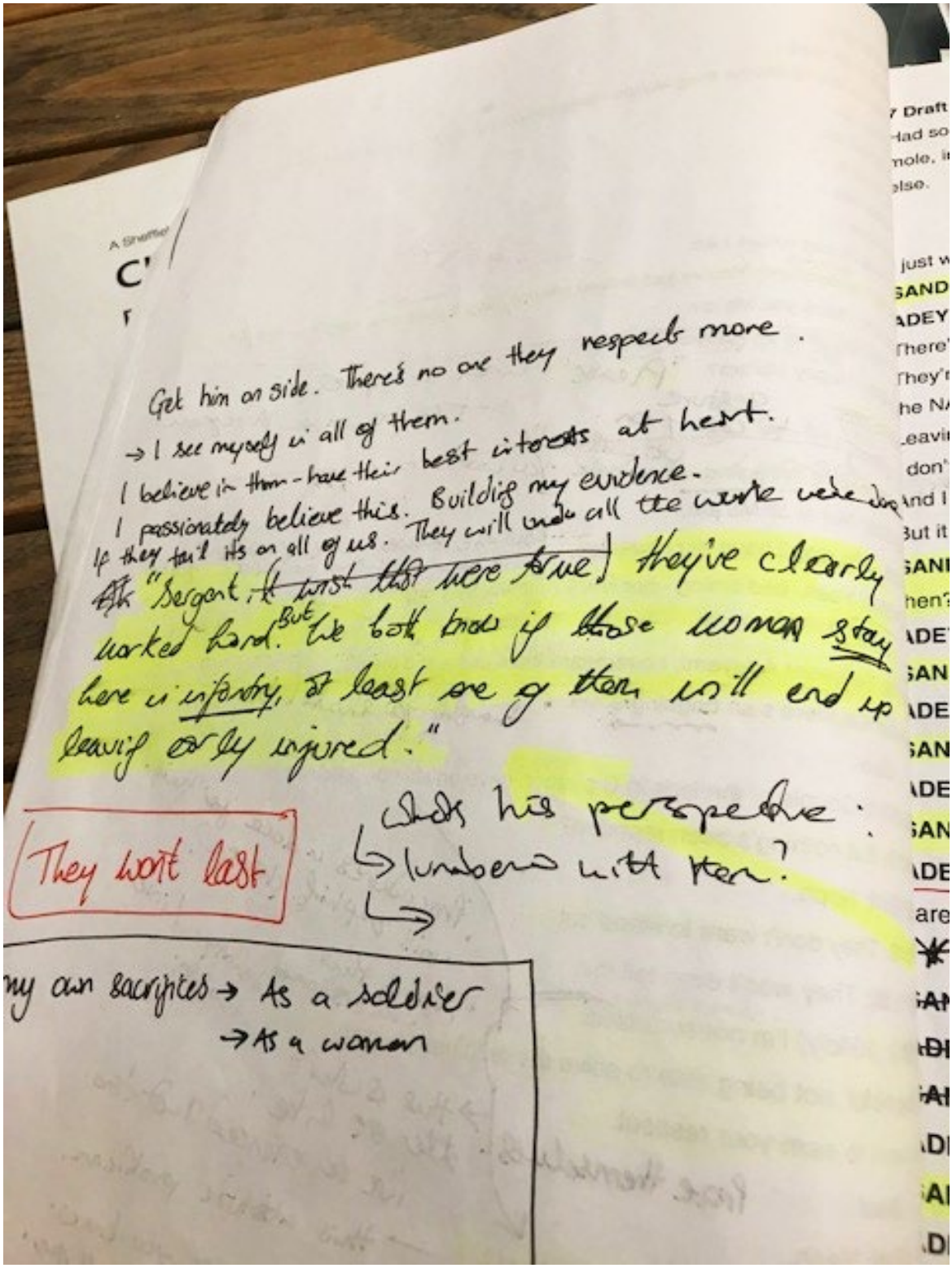


Figure 11: O'Reilly's script with notes, identifying 'I see myself in all of them', plus questions to answer, and directorial notes as reminders, such as 'get him on side'. (Reproduced with kind permission of Kathryn O'Reilly)

There were breakthroughs via moments of clarification and understanding, deepening the cerebral knowledge of the scene as actors returned to moments of recognition. Wasserberg gave notes in relation to the tension and shaping and pace: 'there should be a feeling of what is it, what is it, what is it […] Dylan, you accelerate it here […] then like an elastic band you're stretching it, Chloe' (Field Notes, 2018, l.878-880).

Thinking about the audience's experience continued, and there was a breakthrough for Tylor as she suddenly knew what was required of her:

> TYLOR: Realistically we're discussing this, but theatrically it's *storytime* …
>
> WASSERBERG: In a filmic device you're narrating your own action.
>
> TYLOR: But we have to do that with our voices and bodies?
>
> WASSERBERG: Yeah.
>
> (*Tylor writes notes, and nods*)
>
> (Field Notes, 2018, l.882-886)

Metaphors were also employed by Wasserberg to trigger a result: 'you're running downhill here […] Armstrong you're pushing the stone down the hill here' (Field Notes, 2018, l.888-889), which aligns with Stanislavski who wrote himself into *An Actor Prepares* (1936) as a fictional character where 'metaphors play an ongoing part' (Dacre, 2017, p.10) in Tortsov's[33] teaching. Wasserberg's metaphors continued, as she stated: 'if the other scene is rolling downhill, this is the ledge' (Field Notes, 2018, l.897). Reminiscent of Uta Hagen's notion of substitution, Wasserberg was using metaphor, as if material 'fails to stimulate you sufficiently, [then] you must search for something which will trigger an emotional experience' (Hagen, 1973, p.35).

[33] Tortsov is Stanislavski's fictional self throughout *An Actor Prepares*.

Several other ways in which Wasserberg gave notes were evident through this session, including having an energised physical presence, being in the space with her actors for over fifteen minutes of the twenty-five-minute notes session. Her energy was expansive, with points emphasised by hitting hand upon hand. It was as if her physical energy in giving notes was an embodiment of the physical energy the scene required for the telling of the story. There were also never any line readings[34]. Wasserberg was clear *what* she wanted, but not *how* she wanted the actors to go about embodying this. Finally, she used noises and gestures to illustrate a point: 'A more useful emotion is (*grabs hands and collapses*), rather than this (*jabs finger forward making a grunting noise*)' (Field Notes, 2018, l.905). She even joked later in that set of notes, 'today I'll be directing by noises' (Field Notes, 2018, l.907), to which there was much laughter.

The use of metaphors and the personal stories recounted by Wasserberg engaged her actors' understanding of the potential playing of a moment through engaging their imaginative memories,

WASSERBERG: Bullets are cutting the air-line… You're running as fast as you can… it's like… for you, you have time to… My sister fell down the stairs last week and she said, "I had time to think, 'I am pinwheeling like a person in a cartoon' –

TYLOR: (*Smiles and leans forward*) I fell out of a tree, and I had time to look at my friends and go, "Oh fuck!" I had time to try and grab the trees, and then realising I couldn't grab for any branches, and flipped onto my left-hand side. Everything just slowed down – really weird.

[34] A line reading is a technique where the director says a line to an actor with the emphasis where he or she would like it to be placed.

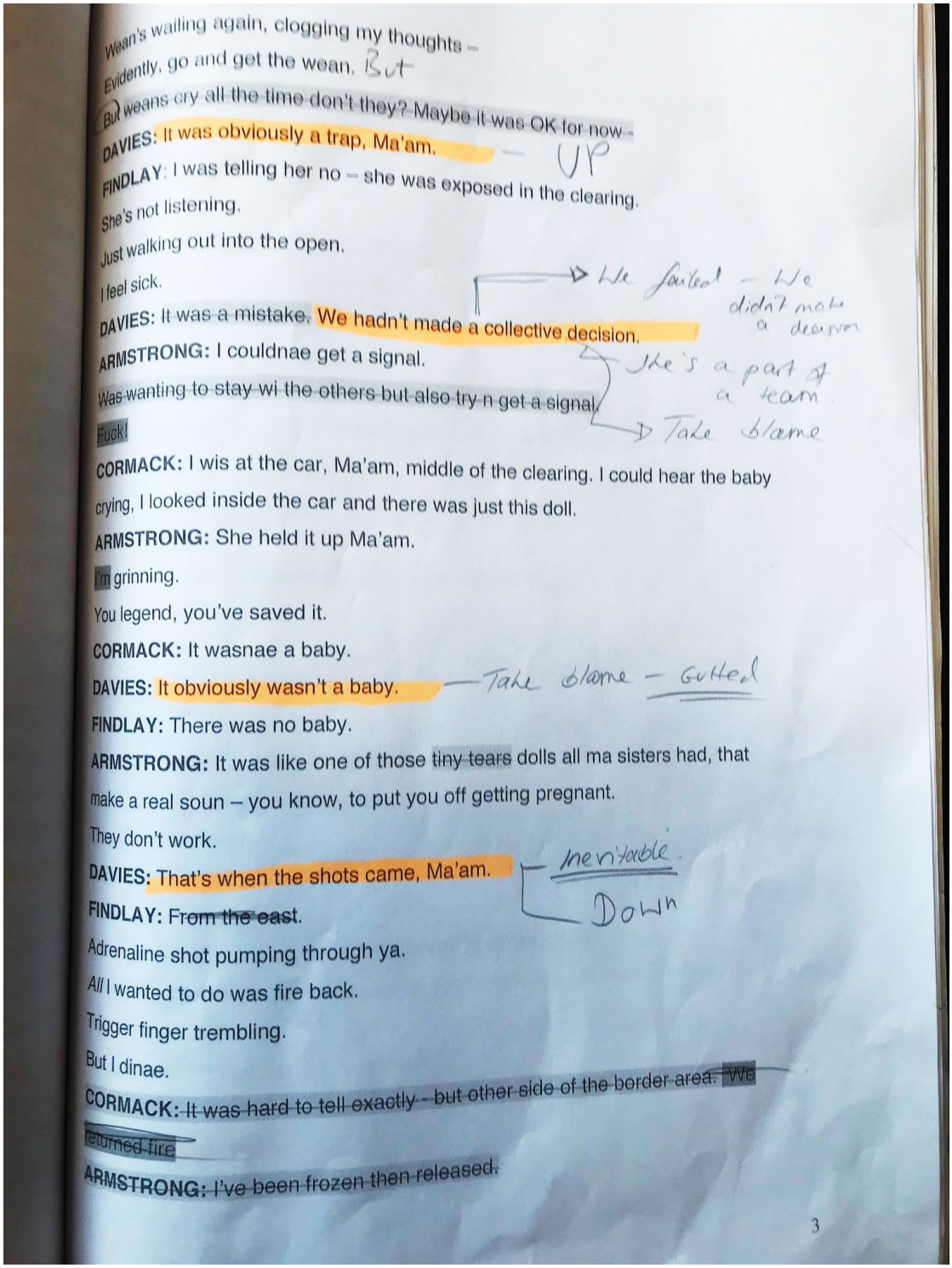


Figure 12: Melville's script. The pencil marks capture Wasserberg's notes on Scene Five, following a stagger-through. (Reproduced with kind permission of Sophie Melville)

WASSERBERG: So that's it I think… it's actually that!

(Field Notes, 2018, l.911 - 918)

Wasserberg allowed Tylor to interrupt her delivery of the notes, as the actress cognitively understood what was needed. It was clear that Tylor understood what Wasserberg was trying to unlock, as she evidently had a personal discovery, since when the scene was re-enacted there was a sense of awareness of her own actions. This manifested itself as a slowing down in the delivery of Cormack's lines as she reflected on events. The 'director must instantly focus the actor's attention on *any* important discovery that enters a moment of rehearsal' (Sidiropoulou, 2019, p.194) and Wasserberg allowed Tylor to take the baton of that discovery. Again, there was no 'magic' happening here, but a director *working* to uncover layers of meaning implicit within the text, allowing her actors to embody the piece.

Wasserberg then did not push for results on their feet, knowing that she had given them nearly thirty minutes of ideas: 'you'll get about 10% of all that […] if you get an instinct [to play something from the notes] follow it, I can always pull you back' (Field Notes, 2018, l.928-929). Although personally exhausted, hearing this volume of notes in quick succession, when the actors played Scene Five, there was an immediate pace and energy to the scene, as they started to play the 'emotional content of the lines' (Field Notes, 2018, l.931) Wasserberg had articulated that the scene required. Interestingly, she did not always feel the need to justify why a note was given, and this pattern was formed by week two: when the actors needed clarification, they asked for it. Otherwise, it was tacitly agreed that there was an understanding, as the actors had agency in their character development. The whole company were aware that the playtext was still in a fluid stage of development at this stage, so actors were not consolidating and finessing many early breakthroughs. For her part, Wasserberg held back from locking in too much form and detail, knowing that the writing deadline for the final draft was still ahead.

After the final run through of the scene, Wasserberg gave a new thought: she simply asked the actors to relay their reported lines to all the other individuals in the room, myself included. Being in 'grasp' (Merlin, 2014, p.207) with their audience through an eyeball-to-eyeball connection (as if we were Sands) gave their version of events an immediacy, as there was a dynamic need for the actors to convince Sands of their points of view. Having this clear target allowed for the scene to affect everybody, including myself. Wasserberg immediately jumped up out of her chair following the run, with immense satisfaction, as she had an individual discovery breakthrough in relation to the form this scene would eventually take:

> WASSERBERG: Watching you like that which was so good... all of you... so good. I think we should do a really stripped-back staging of it, so like, if we get you nicely placed in the space but that was so strong. I'm covered in goose-bumps and that's (*Voice raises*) so exciting! So, let's not have actual guns but find little accents that make it strong rather than full re-creation. Does that make sense?
>
> ALL: (*Overlaps*) Yes!
>
> (Field Notes, 2018, l.945-950)

Wasserberg initially intended this scene to be a busy re-enactment with props, yet seeing the stillness of the re-telling and the effect of the simplicity through connecting to us as an audience, gave her permission to change course. Wasserberg had been giving 'the actors real attention: I pay attention to what's happening in front of me, and I am alive to seeing if the decision I insisted on last week is still working' (Wasserberg, 2019b, l.133). Wanting the scene to be stiller, with merely an iota of physically accented movements, gave focus to the words and the individual points of view of the characters, without privileging any one character voice. By having a counterpoint to the energy of the actual event the audience experienced

during Scene Three, its stillness allowed for a focus on all the characters' emotional states. Wasserberg later stated that

> this was a classic moment of having imagined a scene a certain way for months, only to be confronted with a very different reality. It's always very exciting when you realise you have been completely wrong about something, because suddenly the room is live, and you can do anything. I think a hallmark of my taste is I always ultimately prioritise emotional access over stage pictures, so I often end up stripping away a lot of ideas I have brought into the room because they are in the way, getting between the actor and the audience.
>
> (Wasserberg, 2019a, l.44-50)

Wasserberg's openness, as Ostermeier requests of directors, led her to this point as the directorial approach should be:

> never to know, never to pre-empt what will happen next. It is most important that directing work remains an open (yet never random) process throughout, otherwise you are no longer communicating with the play.
>
> (Ostermeier, 2016, p.143)

5.2.6 A POTENTIAL FOR A DISCOVERY

Wednesday afternoon of week two was an anomaly; as opposed to being physically active in the space, the company spent the session around the table, actioning Scene Seven (none of the other scenes were actioned using this cerebral method, prior to, or following, this rehearsal). Justifying her choice for this rehearsal method, Wasserberg strategically reiterated that, 'yesterday was a bit of a blob, so we need to get some clarity on the [scene] shifts' (Field Notes, 2018, l.959-960). Assuming that she needed this method to allow actors to discover specificity of thoughts, the afternoon

comprised a cerebral examination of actions, line-by-line. Wasserberg wanted the actors to mark the scenic events, each 'a moment in the action when a change occurs and this change affects everyone present' (Mitchell, 2010, p.55), prior to identifying the transitive verbs thought-to-thought.

Previous Artistic Director of Out of Joint Max Stafford-Clark documents his rehearsal process of round-table actioning (for up to two weeks) in his seminal directing text *Letters to George* (2008). Yet, this was a directorial rather than a company method, as Wasserberg stated that she doesn't use this process often, only when needed. She had predetermined the bits and events – asking her actors not to merely accept those sections but to 'push back if you disagree' (Field Notes, 2018, l.969) – as a springboard for unearthing the core action of the scene. There was certainly not a collective positive response to the rehearsal technique. Most actors struggled with actioning, even though Wasserberg was clear in setting up the task, stating that the action is 'in relation to what you're doing to everybody else' (Field Notes, 2018, l.974) and reminding them that, when they were blocked, to think 'what do you want and how do you get it?' (Field Notes, 2018, l.975). However, due to the fact that the actors of *Close Quarters* were not a permanent ensemble with a shared rehearsal language accrued over many years, the rehearsal had mixed results. As discussed in Chapter 2, Western text-based acting often concentrates on the want, the need, and the action; however, there were moments of confusion, even from the actors whose training was within a Western context (Wood and Banton, for example, are both trained at Bristol Old Vic). Wood, who in my professional opinion as a director, boldly embodied and communicated his wants when working on the rehearsal room floor somatically, suddenly struggled in a cerebral environment: 'I know what I'm doing [in the moment] but can't say it' (Field Notes, 2018, l.982). The 'it' referred to is the transitive verb needed for the exercise to work: how their action relates to (and therefore aims to change) the other character in the scene. Wasserberg never judged actors for not knowing something, and in relation to the above counterpoint suggested 'I'll offer [transitive verb] words, and you pick' (Field Notes, 2018, l.986). The

energy dropped through this exercise, especially with the younger members of the company. Banton slouched and played 'footsie' with Melville, whilst experienced actor O'Reilly was firing transitive verbs at full throttle, looking ahead at her script and actioning in advance. Although the majority of actors struggled, Wasserberg continued to keep the exercise on course, reminding her company that an action is not about 'them' (Field Notes, 2018, l.990); the action is about changing the other person in the scene, using transitive verbs as a trigger. The actors continually discussed their actions not in verbs, but in adjectives, emotions, and adverbs. The only actor clear and sharp in relation to this method, as discussed in 5.1.9 above, was O'Reilly, conversant in actioning attributed to Stafford-Clark, with whom she had worked several times.

Wasserberg never returned to this method. There was no shorthand between the actors and the director with this technique, and it was therefore counter-productive in terms of moving rehearsals forward. Rossmanith in her rehearsal observations saw,

> during one rehearsal process […] the heavy use of shorthand between directors and actors – "Sharpen that line", "earn that beat", and I suspected it had to do with a shared training and performance background.
>
> (Rossmanith, 2009, p.28)

Yet there was little shared training or work with this company as outlined in Chapter 4, and no time to embed new ways of working within a short rehearsal period. As the script remained fluid in nature, the main focus was on creating and sharpening the dialogue and story structure.

5.2.7 NUANCES, SHARPENING AND MERGING

Running Scene Four on the Monday of week four as the company headed towards the opening night, the cast aimed to deliver their lines

word-perfectly, correcting themselves in action on the specificity of each thought, having lived with the latest draft for only a week. As Merlin states, 'it pays to be *dead-letter-perfect*' (Merlin, 2016, p.186) and the cast were not willing to be vague in their line-learning, as Wasserberg continually requested nuances of thought changes, not merely playing the textures of anger and conflict on the surface of Scene Four. This new frame of required nuances led to a number of individual discovery breakthroughs, triggered by the directorial note.

The first breakthrough was in relation to one of Wasserberg's identified scene events which is Davies's line, 'walked in the NAAFI[35] there and O'Connor and that bunch were all (*cradles a baby and does waa noises)*' (Bowen, 2018b, p.24). Davies is attacking Cormack on this line, identifying that her impulsive actions in the field have reignited the sexist attitudes towards female front-line squaddies. Initially it was not affecting everybody in the scene as an event. Tylor positively nodded and smiled with a confident 'yeah' (Field Notes, 2018, l.1458), as Wasserberg reminded them that sub-textually this line makes the conversation 'turn to "what are we going to do about the lads?"' (Field Notes, 2018, l.1459). The director ensured that the actors were focusing their character's choices on changing their future (an implicit form of actioning), in order to bring them out of playing conflict and anger. Wasserberg observed that they were playing 'broad brushstrokes of emotion' (Field Notes, 2018, l.1461), but not necessarily detailing thought changes, rhetorical accuracy, and playing of the situation. By concentrating the actors' behaviour on changing their future, Wasserberg was aiming to stop her actors playing a generalised emotion, and focus on solving problems. Melville had a discovery breakthrough when Wasserberg suggested a possible sub-textual meaning of the question 'proud?' (Bowen, 2018b, p.25) as 'how do we sell [the story of Cormack]' (Field Notes, 2018, l.1463). Melville, wide-eyed, hummed a 'yes' vocally.

[35] The Navy, Army and Air Force Institutes (NAAFI) is a government-owned company providing recreational and other goods and services to military personnel.

> It is quite easy to just play a general feeling of a scene. Kate's direction was really helpful because it created a detailed argument that wasn't just fuelled by anger, but fear about what will happen to the women.
>
> (Melville, 2018, l.121-123)

When the scene was replayed, they were directed by Wasserberg to 'land the arguments' (Field Notes, 2018, l.1466), ensuring that what they were arguing for was genuinely played, in order to change the opinion of another rhetorically, rather than merely playing anger. On running the scene, their targets became stronger as a precision about whom they were talking to became clearer, and thoughts turned sharply. The NAAFI event line landed for Wasserberg accurately, as there was a perception of the information as this line was delivered. The other actors allowed the line to affect them organically and Wood (as Armstrong) was witnessed stopping and sighing, and Tylor (as Cormack) shifted her tempo-rhythm[36] and slowly took off her helmet. The characters realised that the gender issues were reignited by the male dominated platoon member's off-stage responses. This event was vital for Wasserberg, as the play's central idea pivots on the idea of the extraordinariness of women's achievements in the army, and where 'every decision I make will be unconsciously filtered through that. I'm aware of that, so I can also be open to it shifting if needs be, but also to unify the show' (Wasserberg, 2019b, l.148).

Wasserberg continued to look for nuances on the first day of week four and stated to O'Reilly that her character has information in the scene that Adeyemi does not, on the line, 'I overheard them at the end there. Sounded like there's an ongoing issue' (Bowen, 2018b, p.12). O'Reilly expressed 'oh yeah, yeah, right' (Field Notes, 2018, l.1499) loudly and smiled

[36] Merlin defines this acting method whereby ''tempo' is the *speed* at which you carry out an action, and 'rhythm' is the *intensity* with which you carry it out' (2016a, 139). In this instance, Tylor's tempo slowed down with the removal of her helmet, with a calmness of realisation; prior to this event, her speed was high tempo and her rhythm was erratic and high in intensity.

with eyes opening, and her eyebrows moved upwards. When the scene was replayed, the note was embodied as O'Reilly had a wry smile; her tone shifted and her subtext suggested 'I know something you don't know', which manifested itself in a cheeky grin and a twinkle in her eye:

> That [note] really helped me, as I wanted to get to the truth of what's going on […] In that scene I thought I had information I could use to trade – especially someone of her position. It allowed me to open the door more gently on the conversation. That's why that note really worked for me.
>
> (O'Reilly, 2018, l.109-112)

On the very last day of the process prior to the technical rehearsals, Scene Seven was being noted following a run-through and a late discovery breakthrough occurred for Wood. Wasserberg stated to Wood that 'McLeish disappears from the Armstrong story [in Scene Seven]. He makes it a story about him and Cormack' (Field Notes, 2018, l.1761). Wood nodded and Tylor stated, 'yeah, 100%' (Field Notes, 2018, l.1762). Wood needed to therefore interpret removing McLeish from his story as a conscious act:

> WOOD: That helped everything too. Drawing into Scene Six to the scenes afterwards. Scene Six was the root of everything for me and what I drew on. That note was important.
>
> MARSDEN: It felt that Cormack was at the forefront of the story?
>
> WOOD: We don't speak together in that scene. Part of me was doing it for Cormack, as it's a funny story and it's a way to break the ice. We're not talking right now and we had an argument, and the reason we aren't talking is about McLeish, so I'm deflecting that, and told a story from a night that Cormack and I had a good laugh.
>
> (Wood, 2019, l.86-92)

In relation to Captain Sands's story in the same scene, Wasserberg stated in the same rehearsal that 'that room' (Bowen, 2018b, p.50) mentioned in her story 'is like Guantanamo[37]' (Field Notes, 2018, l.1765). O'Reilly nodded several times and sat up and wrote this down. Something changed for her through that note as there was an intensity of her playing, which continued to cement a seriousness of tone (as opposed to entertaining, as argued in 5.2.1).

By this late stage, the actors knew what they were needing to achieve as they developed their character's story arcs, relationships and story beats, and therefore directorial notes did not take long to embody. There was a speed and an efficiency to the work during the last two days of rehearsals as the form emerged. This was due to the approaching end-point of an opening night and there was little time to get lost; as van Hove states,

> rehearsals are like a journey. A director has to say, "we start in London and go to Edinburgh", but if the whole company ends up in Bristol then there's a problem. If a director cannot be *clear* at the beginning of rehearsal what your intentions are, content-wise with the text, you're lost.
>
> (van Hove, 2019, l.75-78)

Actors merged rapidly with their character's circumstances, as when the actor begins to '*merge* (synthesise) with [the] character's persona, with all of his given circumstances, [their] personality will change' (Demidov, 2016, p.510, his emphasis). The speed of merging at this late stage was due to the ability of the cast and creative team to sharpen choices made through the filter of the content stage, rather than starting from an embryonic position.

Similarly, perceiving a sharpening of intentions at the end of week four as Banton and O'Reilly rehearsed this bit of Scene Two –

[37] Guantanamo Bay is the American detention camp, which became synonymous with its alleged abuse of prisoners during the 2000s.

SANDS: They don't want to stand out.

ADEYEMI: They won't even tell me.

SANDS: I'm not surprised.

It's shameful not being able to solve these things yourself.

(Bowen, 2018b, p.12)

Wasserberg gave O'Reilly a possible subtext to interpret, with the 'not surprised' line potentially being '"I get it, it's not on you… this is a chat, not a briefing"' (Field Notes, 2018, l.1804), for Sands to lure Adeyemi into her confidence. O'Reilly had a discovery breakthrough here; she nodded and said slowly and thoughtfully 'right – right – OK' (Field Notes, 2018, l.1806). This had a knock-on effect within Merlin's dynamic listening cycle outlined in 2.8, as Adeyemi has a moment to consider if and when he can confide in Captain Sands. This give-and-take is vital for the dynamic of the scene as 'if the give-and-take is stymied, it's wise to reinforce the initiating action' (Bloom, 2001, p.154). There was a luring and ensnaring approach from O'Reilly throughout the rest of the runs observed.

By the end of week four, the actors moved into a place of ownership, with Wasserberg handing over the baton as opening night loomed. Fewer notes were given as breakthroughs occurred, and notes were embodied with ease. When picking up in the middle of Scene Two, for example, Banton needed to go further back from where Wasserberg would like to have started from as he needed 'to choreograph it all' (Field Notes, 2018, l.1815). She agreed without hesitation stating, 'Yeah fine it's no bother, of course, you tell me – I don't know what it's like in there' (Field Notes, 2018, l.1816-1817). Wasserberg was wanting the actors to be as secure within their work as they could be on the tightrope moving towards the preview stage:

> The director is on the ground and they [actors] are on a tightrope. I'm not going to be horrible to them even if they give me a hard time as

> they are on a tightrope and I don't want them to fall off. I'm still me, I'm still human, but I am on the ground. When people infantilise actors, they fall into the trap that actors are childlike. Actors aren't childlike, but if you put me on the tightrope I'd be like a child: scared, grumpy and asking the director 'tell me what to do!'. Not all actors do get scared, but I see it as a reasonable feeling and I am on the ground, so that's why I love actors, and I absorb any of that fear.
>
> (Wasserberg, 2018, l.357-364)

Similar to how Wasserberg describes her work as supporting the actor on the tightrope, director van Hove discusses directorial preparation as being a safety net for the actors above him in the air:

> Your preparation is like in a circus, when there's a safety net for the trapeze artist. Preparation is a safety net, otherwise the trapezist will be dead! Preparation is like a little backpack. I have it with me. But I'm not displaying it – "that's what I know" […] But the backpack is my safety net. It's not there to overwhelm or to be displayed to the actors.
>
> (van Hove, 2019, l.94-105)

5.2.8 SCENOGRAPHIC DISCOVERIES

The director's final major individual discovery moment was on the first day of the technical rehearsal on the Monday of the fifth week. The initial intention in opening the piece was for Findlay to appear, as if from nowhere, in a spotlight centre stage to begin her soliloquy. However, there were practical access problems in the space and the actress couldn't get to the centre in complete blackout to find her mark. Wasserberg suddenly saw the possibility of a backlight casting a shadow through the actual studio dock door (signifying the saw-mill entrance) as Findlay stepped through to deliver her opening soliloquy.

This became an intuitive moment for Wasserberg to further establish the production's memory play frame scenographically. At the opening of the production, a door opened, and into the backlight stepped Findlay, casting a long, looming shadow over the stage as she surveyed (from the future) this Estonian saw-mill. If creation for Bogart is 'one hundred percent intuitive' (Bogart, 2001, p.51), Wasserberg identified a moment in this technical rehearsal, as 'we keep discovering through tech and previews anyway' (Wasserberg, 2019b, l.264), countering Stern's argument that there are few breakthroughs at this stage, and her statement that 'technical rehearsals are moments of learning, but it's not about discovering something new' (Stern, 2018, p.64). Yet, here was a moment of genuine discovery. Wasserberg immediately consulted with her sound designer to create an underscore. He composed a haunting melody of 'Over the Hills and Far Away', a folk song dating back to the 17th Century, based on John Tams's military version of 1996. As the music played, Findlay crossed to the centre of the stage from the dock doors and, as the stage lights came up, began her story. This early moment of scenographic composition (which derived from a practical problem) sharpened the memory play frame and therefore allowed the audience to sense the past, locating the piece as a memory within the production's *mise-en-scène*. This became the story that could not be forgotten by the first character that we encounter. Wasserberg describes the importance of this breakthrough discovery for her:

> the best advice I have ever been given about directing was to *look at what I have* in front of me. Not what I thought I would have, or hoped I would have, or am frightened I don't have, but *what I have*. This was that – the idea of apparition didn't work at all, but we had this incredibly beautiful space created by Max Jones, and I wanted the audience to discover it along with Findlay. The 'memory frame' had been growing in importance as a dramaturgical tool for a while in rehearsals, and in tech we realised that it needed to define the play utterly. Findlay's entrance did that for us, I think.

(Wasserberg, 2019a, l.132-139, her emphasis)

This became the production's powerful opening image, and the composition became a visual exposition, supporting Brook's notion that 'the first thing that the theatre has to do is to make us wish to go on watching' (cited in Todd and Lecat, 2003, p.33). What was initially a logistical problem became a creative possibility, and this image encouraged me to continue watching, and for Wasserberg, this was verified as a breakthrough moment. As a responsive and quick-thinking director, she worked with her team to create an iconic image for the exposition, grounding the piece as a memory play, uniting the fictional world of the playwright and the physical world of the stage, thus 'creating [a] parallel reality […] and encourag[ing] further actions' (Van Den Bosch, 2013, p.14).

5.3 SUMMARY

Chapter 5 narrated the data observed through the first two individual breakthrough lenses: the small moments of recognition and the individual discovery moments. Whilst termed 'Lens One' and 'Lens Two' respectively, Lens One is not a pre-requisite for Lens Two to manifest. Depending on the context of the moment, Lens Two breakthroughs occur independently. Analysis shows that Lens One and Two moments happen randomly throughout the process; therefore, the meaningfulness of a breakthrough is measured against whether it sits within the directorial or production frame, thereby being of use to the overall production, in that it can be built upon through the next set of rehearsals in the production process. Wasserberg herself says that she blocks ideas and the chance to build on discoveries if they sit outside the production's frame:

> You also have to know why you are insisting on your way and knowing why the play needs it. If you say "yes, yes, yes, yes, sorry – no" they know the "no" comes from a place that I might be wrong.

(Wasserberg, 2019b, l.126-128)

Chapter 6 introduces an analysis of breakthroughs viewed through Lenses Three and Four: the shared discoveries that occurred in the rehearsal process of *Close Quarters*, and the collective 'wow' moments, where all variables coalesce into a 'rightness' for the moment.

CHAPTER 6: THE REHEARSAL PROCESS 2 – COLLECTIVE BREAKTHROUGHS AND 'WOW' MOMENTS

6.0 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 6 concentrates on analysing the data surrounding collective moments of breakthroughs; defining what these are, and identifying how these manifested themselves during the *Close Quarters* rehearsals. As with Chapter 5, this chapter does not follow a chronological narration from week one to production week, but highlights thematically key moments. As too with Chapter 5, not all breakthroughs are discussed, but the ones identified are seminal to understanding how a shared or collective breakthrough accrues, and how it may be ascertained as meaningful for the overall process in the making of *Close Quarters* and the participant's awareness of the breakthrough.

6.1 LENS THREE: 'AHA' – A COLLECTIVE DISCOVERY MOMENT

Similar to the individual breakthroughs outlined in Chapter 5, this is a breakthrough that manifests itself as a shared discovery of something new between two or more people in the rehearsal room. These came steadily throughout the rehearsal process where often actors connected more with their scene partners. There were fewer daily collective breakthroughs overall although there were more daily individual breakthroughs.

6.1.1 RETURNING TO POLARITIES

The first day of week two saw fight company RC-Annie, alongside Wasserberg, directing the central inciting incident of Scene Three. Essentially three directors were at work here – (RC-Annie is a duo) – creating the physical world of the scene, ensuring story clarity for the somatic storytelling, as the Squad, whilst on patrol in a forested area, are tricked into discovering a what they believe to be a baby, and are consequently

ambushed under fire. Even within the severity of the scenic material, Wasserberg and RC-Annie kept the rehearsal room's tone light and jocular, as the actors at early stage of rehearsal were still orientating to each other and still forming as an ensemble. The jocularity of the process counterpointed both the military precision needed, and the stakes required by the dramaturgy as the impending possibility of death pervades the action as a pressing issue[38]*.* The actors were having to justify the lines alongside the blocking of the military precision: balancing the need for stage truth with military verisimilitude, whilst being cognisant of the pressing issue of death. Oscillating between these polarities, RC-Annie were justifying the pragmatic physical language, whilst Wasserberg sharpened the psychological context of the scene and relationships between characters. During Scene Three, Cormack makes a move to the vehicle:

> (*CORMACK shakes her head and continues to move across the clearing … the baby wails again*.)
>
> CORMACK: (*To* FINDLAY) How sure are you?
>
> (*FINDLAY stares at her*.)
>
> CORMACK: I'm going.
>
> (Bowen, 2018, p.25)

Wasserberg wanted to ensure in the physical playing of the moment that the stare between them explicitly outlined in the stage directions above was clear for the audience, alongside the need to allow time for the audience to register all the component physical parts of the military signals and physical actions, and ensure they read the story beats clearly. There was an immediate collective verbal agreement, and physical nodding of heads, when Wasserberg stated that 'we all need to bring the pace down to have clarity before we [bring up the pace] for victory' (Field Notes, 2018, l 634). A

[38] A pressing issue is defined as a 'subject that underlines a dialogue, propelling it – either secretly or implicitly – in a particular direction and […] it's the preoccupation which can drive a character's objective' (Merlin, 2016, p.79).

shared discovery through Lens Three was noted, as the cast discovered something simultaneously, since the rehearsal aim was to balance freedom with structure: the actor's impulses in a moment within the perceived reality of the moment with slowing down and honouring moments, such as the stare which highlights Findlay and Cormack's relationship. According to Shevtsova (2014) identifying this type of scoring of the role allows an actor to combine freedom within a boundary. This therefore allowed the frames to be honoured, as the actors worked impulsively within them. Wasserberg continued to be clear as she layered incisive notes:

> there's a weirdness of seeing a car – knowing it's a civilian car – hearing a baby […] this springboards you into what comes next […] You're in a debate [with each other], not falling out.
>
> (Field Notes, 2018, l.637-639)

Wasserberg's note introduced the actors for the first time in the rehearsal process to the frame introduced during rehearsals for their characters to problem-solve, as 'the actor's job is […] to try and *solve* his or her problems' (Cohen, 2013, p.30). On re-running of the scene there was sharper clarity: a clarity of characters not working in tension against each other; rather, any underlying tension accrued as they aimed to understand the ambiguity of the scene's situation, as identified by Wasserberg, with an awareness of the pressing issue of potential death. The embodiment of the given circumstances, with the directorial note as its catalyst, was clear; this sat alongside technical notes from RC-Annie concerning how to work out the direction from which shooters are firing: 'you are working this out from the dust that the bullets shoot up and the sounds – there's an echo' (Field Notes, 2018, l.645-647). Wasserberg continually reminded the actors, following the rehearsal with RC-Annie, that the fight directors were 'giving you stuff to do so it looks like you're problem solving [not sitting in the problem] and gives texture' (Field Notes, 2018, l.645). As a director Wasserberg continued layering the psychological storytelling alongside the physical narrative.

Throughout this period of aiming for military verisimilitude, Wasserberg also layered in facts about their relationships, fearful that, in the precision for reality, the character's stories were being diluted. She reminded Cormack and Findlay that for them, the 'war becomes real' (Field Notes, 2018, l.651). Her rehearsal methods sit within the frame of bridging the psychological detail within physical and practical shaping.

6.1.2 SOCRATIC QUESTIONING

Wasserberg's rehearsal structure was consistent: the actors read through the scene a couple of times, ensuring that there was clarity of meaning of words and phrases and that basic relationship arcs were understood, core events highlighted and dramaturgy understood. This then led into 'on the floor' work and the use of Socratic questioning[39], steering actors to take ownership and discover their own answers, as they cracked the play's codes. In the rehearsal in the second day of week two, a question posed by the director led to a shared moment of discovery between Melville and Wasserberg. Beginning with a moment of backstory clarification for the character, Wasserberg asked Melville why her character didn't become a driver in the army, as opposed to joining the infantry:

WASSERBERG: Infantry was hard [...] She could have done logistics, signalling, but when they were in training there was this call, "who wants to sign up?" Was that, "fuck it, it sounds impossible, I'll do that"?

MELVILLE: Yeah… yeah…

WASSERBERG: Great.

[39] A form of facilitation whereby questions are often answered by further questions, allowing the participant (whether actor in a rehearsal room or student in a classroom) to come to their own conclusions in the 'hope that the [actor/student] might understand it more deeply, having worked it out for themselves' (Oram, 2018, p.282).

DAWSON: Sands wouldn't have to lure you with the cars, as you've already chosen cars.

WASSERBERG: If it's about excitement and getting out of Carmarthenshire; I wonder if there's quite a fun joke to be had about, like, "I just wanted to get out of the fucking countryside? It looked awesome bombing around in the desert all day".

(Field Notes, 2018, l.805-815)

They both sat forward, Wasserberg crouching up on her seat as Melville sat up: they had discovered something new simultaneously. Wasserberg herself did not know why Davies started in the infantry until she questioned the actor. As actor O'Reilly stated later:

> You have to trust also that the director will guide you if it's not working […] I love questions – Kate would pose questions and made you think about it.
>
> (O'Reilly, 2018, l.118-121)

Wasserberg continued throughout the rehearsal period reminding the actors to work somatically through their impulses and listen to each other. When working impulsively, she stated that there were 'no rules, find any [physical] shape you'd like; have a play, grab a box or a table. The only rule is don't do what you did last time' (Field Notes, 2018, l.820). Marrying Socratic questioning with allowing impulsive decisions to inform the organic blocking of the scene *drafts*, Wasserberg created an environment where actors were embodying, by taking ownership of their process and characters. As the current artistic director of the Royal Shakespeare Company, Gregory Doran, states, 'you want […] to release [actors] […] I learnt, as a director, very early on in my career that you had to produce the process by which the actor could get to that performance' (Doran, in Bessell, 2019, p.123), as opposed to restricting and shutting down actor's creative processes. An actor's agency is at the heart of Wasserberg's directorial philosophy.

6.1.3 FINDING A FORM WITHIN THE FRAME

By the second day of the third week, physical forms of the scenes were developing, with props and other elements of the production environment such as basic costumes being present in the rehearsal space, and scene transitions were being specifically choreographed to music. The audience's receiving of the stage pictures was continually in Wasserberg's thoughts: 'what picture do we want the lights to come up on, to suggest we are all in a bunk-room?' (Field Notes, 2018, l.1226), she asked the actors in the round-table reconnaissance work on Scene One, prior to working the scene on its feet. The actors and director discussed possibilities such as sitting on edge of beds, unpacking kit bags, and polishing boots. These signifiers are vital to guide the audience in receiving the story, due to the composite setting of the piece. A clear physical narrative was being constructed by the company to guide the audience to receive a moment in a certain way. Wasserberg does not leave to chance the clarity of this moment. Dan Rebellato states clearly that theatre professionals do not

> repeat the silly but persistent idea that theatre is entirely created in the minds of the audience. The theatre artists shape, for the most part, the performance object and these decisions are crucially important; however, the audience determines its significance, meaning, affect, resonance, understanding, reach, function, ambiguity, playfulness, profundity and power.
>
> (Rebellato, 2013, p.14)

The clarity of the characters being in their bunk-room sharpened each time as the visual signifiers were clear and embedded: shoes were polished, water bottles drunk from, beds made; there was a comfortableness to the characters being present in their own setting.

An extremely clear moment of the wider creative team needing frames and structure from the director became apparent within this

rehearsal. RC-Annie were setting the transition between Scene Four and Five when, following some indecision, Rachel Bown-Williams stated to Wasserberg that 'we're making something without parameters' (Field Notes, 2018, l.1239). The movement directors were needing a hook; a frame within which to work, just as the director gave her actors frames progressively over the first two weeks. Wasserberg seized her phone and provided music as a response, which was Clipping's 'Intro'[40], which has a rapid tempo with a staccato rhythm to give the scene 'a hard edge' (Field Notes, 2018, l.1241) according to Wasserberg. The result was a high octane, spikey, dynamic movement sequence which found itself in the production. Just as the actors needed a frame, so too did the movement directors, which informed the final piece.

Sidiropoulou argues that generating a frame creates meaning which then becomes 'democratically created – being a shared property rather than the privilege of one single person' (Sidiropoulou, 2019, p.23). Extending this, the frame is created by the director and designer *prior to* and during the early stages of rehearsal, which is then democratically *owned* during rehearsals. In this example, it was owned by RC-Annie, and finally by the actors. Later during that rehearsal and now with a potential awareness of RC-Annie's needs, Wasserberg gave the actors and RC-Annie a frame prior to the commencement of building the next movement transition between Scenes Five and Six: 'think about acting this – the chaos is more important than 1, 2, 3 [i.e. getting the counts correct], so a bit of character from you is needed' (Field Notes, 2018, l.1250-1251). There was an immediate collective discovery (the actors were anxious to perfect their movement to the music, as opposed to communicating their character's stories), with much nodding and verbal agreement from the company. Later Bown-Wiliams asked Banton 'it feels good when it's right doesn't it?' (Field Notes, 2018, l.1253), as the actor smiled broadly, radiating joy that he got the physical movement *right* for the transition. In this case, Rossmanith's notion of 'rightness' applies,

[40] The music can be heard here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n4HQb7DZI0I

where it is accrued from marrying the psychological needs of the character with technical skill and fluency. Wasserberg continued to give frames and rules to the cast on this transition also: 'urgency, urgency, urgency, urgency, urgency' (Field Notes, 2018, l.1256) she implored, which aligned the specific movements to the acting intentions, as she encouraged them not to 'think of it as a movement sequence but think of it as getting ready to go [on patrol] […] let the scene flow through the movement' (Field Notes, 2018, l.1258). The tension in the movement sequence when they replayed the transition was palpable, as collective embodied notes radiated in the room.

6.1.4 PLAY AND RISK-TAKING THROUGH LETTING GO

As personal relationships had developed by week three, actors took more risks and explored playfully. Risk-taking is about letting go, where 'effort is gone […] as a path to the working of the subconscious' (Demidov, 2016, p.533). Melville and Wood were clearly strong colleagues and had a natural comedic repartee in the sub-rehearsals and on breaks. In a moment of working out a more light-hearted physical transition between Scenes Seven and Eight, where Davies teases Armstrong and aims to cheer him up, they improvised a play fight. Risk-taking occurred as Wasserberg gave the actors frames to work within and instructed Melville about a 'clowning rule, where [Armstrong's] going to be a mard-arse and you're going to do everything you can to make him laugh' (Field Notes, 2018, l.1266-1267). Laughter and play emanated as a merging of Melville and Wood's offstage relationship with their onstage counterparts took place. There was tickling, rolling and playfighting – and at the end of the sequence Wasserberg declared with glee: 'I genuinely believe this is what [the characters would have done' (Field Notes, 2018, l1269); all the other actors and RC-Annie had faces of joy and shared understanding. The verification snowballed as Bown-Williams declared 'game on!' (Field Notes, 2018, l.1270). Knowing they had broken through collectively, Wasserberg again returned to music, providing

as a stimulus Hot Chip's 'Over and Over'[41], a quirky, jumpy and playful track. RC-Annie ensured that the improvised play became safe as they married content with form. In all of this playfulness, Wasserberg had an eye for the story beats and clarity for the situation, as 'in the chaos we still need a beat; a moment of clarity when Cormack decides to cheer [Armstrong] up' (Field Notes, 2018, l.1274). Rea states that 'there should be moments in the training when actors can feel the freedom of play observed with the uninhibited joy of children […] where there will be few judgements but many discoveries' (Rea, 2014, p.240). Rea links discovery to play in an atmosphere of growth. Play and discovery occurred during this rehearsal within a positive and collegiate rehearsal room atmosphere, allowing for the creative state to sustain itself.

Was there more risk-taking because of any 'distinct correlation between the safety of the rehearsal room and the risky work of discovering self'? (Filmer and Rossmanith, 2011, p.232). Potentially, as this is about their characters' relationships developing rather than self-awareness. Johnston argues for an ensemble company, rather than actors coming together anew for each show, so that actors can be brave, and this 'makes the risk-taking process much less fearful' (Johnston, 2006, p.137) from the early stages as 'risk is a key ingredient in the act of violence and articulation' (Bogart, 2001, p.48). Although not a permanent ensemble, witnessing the *norming* of the *Close Quarters* company occurring at this stage relates to the observation of ease and risk taking. Tuckman defines norming as being when a

> cohesiveness develop[s], new standards evolve, and new roles are adopted. In the task realm, intimate, personal opinions are expressed. Thus, we have the stage of norming.
>
> (Tuckman, 1965, p.396)

As this is not an ensemble company, however, the *norming* phase was manifesting itself only well into the third week, when risks were more

[41] This can be heard here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G3IehEPqHVk

forthcoming, which relates to entering a scenic moment fully, singularly and without question. Bogart's notion of the 'attack' highlights the need to risk-take:

> When attacked [in Japanese], you always have two options: to enter, *irimi*, or to go around, *ura* […]. To enter or "to choose death" means to enter fully with the acceptance, if necessary, of death. The only way to win is to risk everything and be fully willing to die […] To achieve the violence of decisiveness one has to "choose death" in the moment by acting fully and intuitively.
>
> (Bogart, 2001, p.49)

Witnessing Melville and Wood fully commit to playing, they intuitively and impulsively worked together within Wasserberg's frame and entered fully into the improvisation. They risked to create, and a breakthrough occurred.

6.1.5 IT'S ALL A MATTER OF TIME

In day four of week three, collective discovery moments occurred in relation to Wasserberg confirming the timeline (from the new draft) to the cast and stating 'just how little sleep you've had' (Field Notes, 2018, l.1420). This new information creates a pressure-cooker environment for the characters in relation to their timeline, with events occurring in the main body of the play, now over a mere five days (See Figure 13 below).

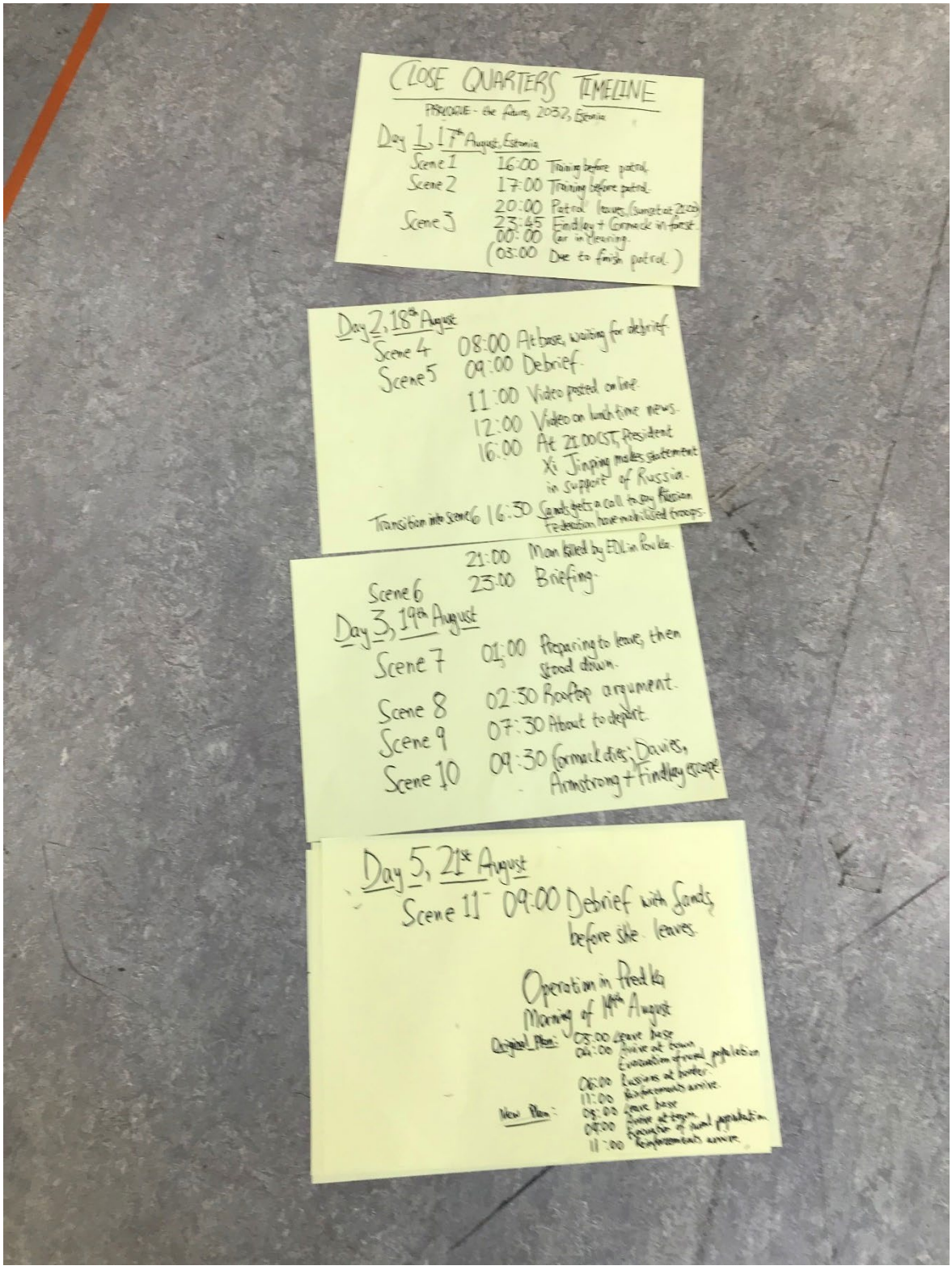


Figure 13: The five-day timeline of events in Close Quarters, as written out by the assistant director.

This confirmation of the (new) given circumstances was immediately met with much collective nodding, 'ah, yes […] "right"s […] "Oh my God" from Dylan' (Field Notes, 2018, l.1422) and O'Reilly transposed these key times into her script (Figure 14) which was salient for her character arc:

> Time is limited and what [a] thing like sleep deprivation does to people's reactions, thought processes and energy levels – physical and mental. If you've been up for ten hours, you have to think about how does that affect you, and then how you connect with those lines.
>
> (O'Reilly, 2018, l.122-124)

Actors were discovering, combining new knowledge with previous knowledge, (the prior draft did not precisely specify the timeline of events), moving to a place of understanding. By this stage, Wasserberg was calling the actor/character 'you', in the second person, as actors merged with their character's given circumstances, relating their '"dramatic I" with their "real I"' (Benedetti, 2008, p.4). By examining the timeline and shifting her language, Wasserberg aimed 'to knead and warm-up the play [as it had] lost the temperature of its first reading' (Demidov, 2016, p.558). With increasing flow in the rehearsal room, actors needed new challenges and offers as their skill levels (i.e. their embodied knowledge of the play) grew. Wood's visceral reaction to the new timeline was verified: a clear example of an actor making a breakthrough in relation to merging himself with the character:

> If I'm being honest with you, what happened there was that I'm a chronic sleeper. Dylan is, not Armstrong […] So, that for me was a "holy shit" moment – how do people do that? Day one to day four in the play they collectively slept for 8 hours – for me that was ludicrous – absolutely ludicrous.
>
> (Wood, 2019, l.75-80)

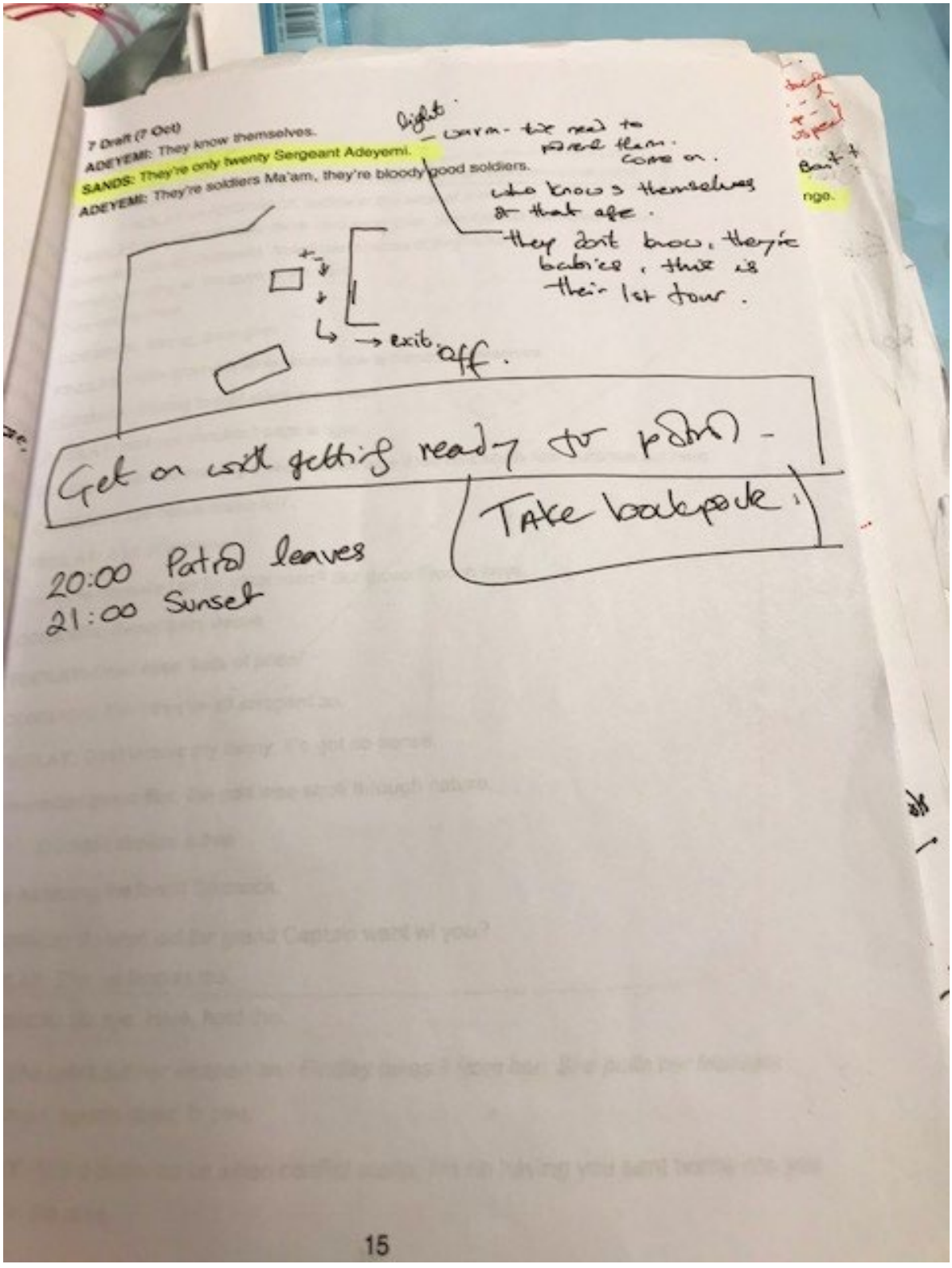


Figure 14: O'Reilly's script with timeline indicated on the left-hand side of the page. (Reproduced with kind permission of Kathryn O'Reilly)

6.1.6 SOLUTIONS NOT PROBLEMS

By Monday of week four, actors were crying out, 'oh yeah, yeah' (Field Notes, 2018, l.1472) collectively in relation to Wasserberg reminding them that once again Scene Four is about working on solutions and not sitting in problems. This built out from the individual breakthroughs on this scene outlined in 5.2.7. There was a collective breakthrough when they all smiled, laughed and recognised a moment, as Wasserberg reminded the cast that the middle part of Scene Four, where they are laughing and joking about mothers and bantering about past events, is like a 'reset button' (Field Notes, 2018, l.1477) for their character's situation. For Wasserberg, this scene (following the major inciting incident) has to unify the characters in the face of adversity. When replaying the scene, there was a genuine sense of moving from conflict to that of yielding. The turning point of the scene's dynamic for the director's needs was honoured and played specifically. They unified from within the conflict, and made sense of their director's note:

> It became less about a general rage at Cormack and more frustrated, because she has put their position at risk. It made the scene richer and more exciting to play. This then made the reset button less jarring, because it felt like they had to stick together and resolve the problems.
>
> (Melville, 2018, l.123-125)

Wasserberg by this rehearsal was giving less feedback following the run of a bit or scene. Ownership continued to move from director to actors as they sharpened their playing of each moment and into a sense of flow.

6.1.7 SNOWBALLING, DEBATING, DISCUSSING, AND BASHING

The arrival of a discovery should be thought of as 'a springboard for a new departure' (Marowitz, 1998, p.8). Wood and Wasserberg had a shared breakthrough during week four whilst working on Scene Six. Through a

snowballing of ideas, debate and discussion, a moment was unlocked. After a rejected kiss from Armstrong to Cormack, the following dialogue is exchanged:

ARMSTRONG: Why are you so angry?

CORMACK: You know what happened last time. Imagine if the others –

Beat

ARMSTRONG: How would they know?

Beat

Do you think I'd *tell* them? Those animals?

(Bowen, 2018, p.53)

Wood stopped suddenly after reading that part of the script and Wasserberg asked,

WASSERBERG: Are you feeling stuck?

WOOD: No, no, I'm not feeling stuck…

(Field Notes, 2018, l.1552-1553)

Perceiving that there was something Wood was unsure about that needed unlocking, Wasserberg took a rare look at her script and discovered: 'Oh, Oh, Oh, Kate's written it in the text – there's emphasis on the "tell"' (Field Notes, 2018, l.1554-1555), after Wood asked where to put the emphasis on the line. Wasserberg did not give a line reading, but gave a context, which drew on her recognition of the timeline as discussed in 6.1.5, stating 'you've really liked [Cormack], secretly really liked her for a year. You'd never ever betray her trust. But this is so special' (Field Notes, 2018, l.1557-1558). This resonated with Wood immediately as he started playing around with the emphasis of each word of the line. When he placed emphasis on the word 'tell', he suddenly exclaimed:

WOOD: "Yes!!"

(*He shouts, jumps in the air; Dawson, Wasserberg and Haugton-Shaw simultaneously cry out "yeah!/yes!"*)

WOOD: (*Beaming and grinning*) I heard it... I heard it… I heard it!

(Field Notes, 2018, l.1561-1563)

Having discovered something new with his director, Wood was keen to play the scene again, yet his acting partner had gone to the toilet whilst he worked through this section! He was therefore keen to get her back in the room and as Tylor returned, he joked: 'we nailed it when you were gone!' (Field Notes, 2018, l.1566).

Springboarding from an examination of the logic text, the shared discovery allowed for a moment of clarity in the meaning and therefore the truth of the moment. Wood verified the importance of this rehearsal:

> I didn't understand the italics on the "tell". I didn't understand why I should be emphasising that word. Being stupid, I didn't ask anyone and assumed I could pull it off a different way. In my head it's "why would I tell *them*?" suggesting I could tell someone else. But I couldn't make sense of the "tell", but when I hear it now it's the only way to say it. […] Kate not giving a line reading I very much appreciated, and I remember that moment realising that via the note she gave me I wouldn't betray that trust. It became "why would I tell this to anyone"; as opposed to playing it that "I'm not pals with those guys", it became personal.
>
> (Wood, 2019, l.64-71)

This was echoed by Wasserberg who stated:

> the writer always knows! So often when we can't crack something it turns out we simply haven't gone back to the text. The text nearly always contains the answer. Here, the stress on the line gave us a

> completely new context, one that we had missed. So, it wasn't about thoughtlessly following the stress indicated, but using that to decode the thinking behind the line. When the writer isn't in the [room], the script is the map.
>
> (Wasserberg, 2019, l.85-90)

Thus, 'by analysing the structure of the words, by reverse-engineering, you begin to discover the thoughts that bring them into existence' (Alfreds, in Bessell, 2019, p.91), Wood and Wasserberg unlocked a pivotal moment by exploring the logic text.

6.1.8 METAPHORS AS TRIGGERS

As discussed throughout Chapter 5, Wasserberg used metaphor as a directorial tool triggering breakthroughs. On day four of week four, whilst directing how to deliver a list of insults just before Cormack fights with Findlay, she suggested to the actress playing Findlay to 'spear [Cormack] with a stick. Don't machine gun her [with the lines]' (Field Notes, 2018, l.1610), gesturing with an imaginary sphere and twisting it into an equally imaginary person. Wasserberg wanted the actors to build the tension in the scene, in order to organically motivate the fight between Findlay and Cormack at its denouement, but did not articulate how they should go about this. Using metaphor, she asked them to 'stretch the elastic band [of the tension], then the fight lets it go' (Field Notes, 2018, l.1613). Both actresses nodded intensely and identified this by saying 'yeah, yeah' (Field Notes, 2018, l.1614). There was a genuine connection in the running of the scene on its feet following this shared discovery; each wanting to change the other, and each actor found visible vulnerability as these two friends hurt one another: first with words, then with fists. Tylor confirmed that this was a breakthrough, referring to the scene as 'too safe' prior to this shared discovery with little underlying tension or drama:

> Sometimes I would try things that were tiny and even if they didn't work […] but like, that was a big breakthrough for me […] I think personally I felt safer during that scene.
>
> (Tylor, 2018, l.134-136)

Stumbling through the scene again, tension developed by working on impulses of where they wanted to move; the actors organically blocked themselves. Moments of embodiment continued to occur as Tylor identified that 'once we'd finished it I thought, "I don't know whether we can do it again as we can't recreate it, and it was magic"' (Tylor, 2018, l.74-75). Yet, the work underpinning and leading towards that moment of 'magic' over several weeks had finally unlocked in that specific rehearsal, through a shared discovery triggered by a directorial metaphor.

6.2 LENS FOUR: THE COLLECTIVE COMPANY 'WOW' MOMENT

Defining a 'wow' moment as 'where all the variables comes together […] There's a moment or a particular run which is just stunning and powerful and compelling and raw and sometimes, that's it!' (McAuley, 2015, l.44), McAuley initially posited the term 'wow moment' to allude to something electric that may happen in a rehearsal, because when she 'started to write about that, it was in response to people saying how boring it must have been to sit in rehearsal all day long' (McAuley, 2019, l.168). McAuley wanted people to know, through the use of this colloquialism, that rehearsals contain visceral and vibrant moments.

Developing this definition further, and moving the focus from how the observer may describe a particular moment to that of the collective *feel* that is shared by the majority of people in the room, a 'wow' moment, therefore, is a collective 'rightness' for the company. During the observation, viewing a 'wow' moment through Lens Four was accompanied by physical shifts, (including punching the air with joy at one point), which relates to the

Oxford English Dictionary's notion that 'wow' 'chiefly express[es] astonishment or admiration' (1989, xx, p.595) at an accomplishment.

'Wow' moments, as per Figures 16 and 17, were few overall yet manifested themselves across the rehearsal period. Having wrongly assumed that these might have occurred more at the end of rehearsal, as a form of metaphorical icing on a metaphorical cake of sedimented layers of recognition moments and discoveries all aligning, it transpired that they in fact came at various stages as each potential sub-moment was unlocked and a collective rightness accrued.

Observing rehearsals through Lens Four, *Close Quarters* never experienced a 'wow' moment following a run-through. That is not to say it does not occur in other rehearsal periods; in my own professional experience, it has indeed occurred. Nevertheless, not every production that I have been involved with had a 'wow' moment following a run. This is rare, but the *Close Quarters* ethnography validated my own reflections on my professional practice, where smaller moments of the rehearsal coalesce and align to achieve this sensation. The 'wow' moments occurred within the 'here, today, now' (Merlin, 2014, p.214) of a moment, regardless of the depth of knowledge and understanding, and as an observer, I was 'no longer [to] know exactly which actor is in support and which actor initiated the action: they are simply together' (Chaikin, in Evans, 2015, p.187). This supports the proposition that 'the complex nature of collective creativity' (McAuley, 2012, p.28) is vital to study; they occurred as a potential celebration, along with a sense of relief in achieving something profound or meaningful, or a way of expressing a collective unlocking of a moment.

6.2.1 SONG AS 'WOW'

The first 'wow' moment was very early on, during the fourth day of rehearsal, following Haughton-Shaw's morning physical circuit training routine which had placed the actors into a creative state. 'The Blackbird

Song', (a folk song), was being taught technically by the musical director to the acting company, who struggled with the sense of it, learning it with a wistful, *bel canto* tone. Wasserberg gave the inciteful and playable note, that the song is, in fact, 'homicidal, but joyously homicidal' (Field Notes, 2018, l.471). Asking the actors to sing to each other in pairs, she reminded them that the song's lyrics refer to killing. They sang it again; this time, with a tough tenseness, and what can only be described as a Machiavellian glint in their eyes.

Immediately following that exercise, there was a physical stillness and an atmosphere of menace. There was a pause, similar to Longhurst's (2010) notion of the impasse. Suddenly, Melville commented on the intenseness of the moment, O'Reilly breathed out a major sigh of relief, and they all smiled. Wasserberg's single note unlocked a major moment. There was a company rightness here for the tonality of the song, as it earnt its place in the dramaturgical structure of the play: a first significant 'wow' moment. This regimental song did not find a place in the final production, but it was clear that the song unified the characters of the unit to fight, which is what the breakthrough was about, as the four squaddies united in a homicidal mission to defend themselves, in order to counter the pressing issue of death.

6.2.2 MOVEMENT AS 'WOW'

Following a full warm-up with longer circuit timings on the second day of week two, there was a satisfying achievement in the room as the actors pushed themselves further physically each day, aligning themselves to the needs of the character's situation, and merging their 'dramatic I with their real I to become the "third being"' (Benedetti, 2008, p.9), the merging of self and character. The requirement for actors to have physical strength was a pre-requisite of the audition process, as discussed in the frames in 4.6 above, and the daily physical training had physically developed them individually, with the company forming and norming as an ensemble through

the daily ritual of shared circuit training. This spilled out into the sub-rehearsal, as during the first weekend, one actress went running, one actor went to the gym, and a third went boulder-climbing. Their sense of physical accomplishment spilt into their work with RC-Annie, as they continued to create choreographed military sequences throughout the second week of rehearsals. From this exploration of content, a form started to emerge at this early stage, with the component parts of the military language of zigzags, vectors, arrowheads, wedges, columns and their associated signals becoming embodied, moving deeper into the actor's muscular memories as sequences were developing.

The 'wow' moment came out of this, as the actors were building a physical movement sequence. Cooper-Brown said that the audience needed, through the physical work, 'to get to know you as characters' (Field Notes, 2018, l.748), as the story of each movement sequence changed, from training in Scene One as a 'simple metaphor of learning' (Field Notes, 2018, l.749), to dexterous physical competencies later in the piece, as character relationships radiated through the physical language of the production. When recapping a movement sequence that had been begun the previous week, there were, upon completion, immediate applause, cries of 'yes!', and smiling from every member of the cast. This collective joy was the second collective company 'wow' moment. Clive Bell (company member of Complicité's *The Elephant Vanishes* (2003)) states that in rehearsals, 'there would be an epiphanic moment; a group movement or a stage interaction that was so right, so perfect, you wanted to throw your hat in the air and cheer'. (Harvie and Lavender, 2010, p.75). The actors certainly cheered after accomplishing this group movement effectively.

6.2.3 GIVEN CIRCUMSTANCES

Prior to a read-through of Scene Seven, Wasserberg reminded her actors of their given circumstances in relation to the time, stating that after

the briefing in Scene Six, 'you don't go to sleep, you're in a state of readiness' (Field Notes, 2018, l.1027). This was during day four of week two as the actors began to describe their characters in the first person as the merging process gathered apace. Wasserberg also talked to them in role as she said, 'you're thinking…' (Field Notes, 2018, l.1029), as opposed to referring to the character in the third person. Indeed, later in the rehearsal period she made explicit who the architect of the character is, as she said to Tylor, 'you're building this character' (Field Notes, 2018, l.1031), making it explicitly clear that the actors were to take ownership. Rea jokes, 'the director can be on the first plane out of town if it's a disaster, and the actors have to hold it together and keep going' (Rea, 2015, l.40); the actors therefore must embody rehearsal room work, prior to their director's escape!

As the scene was re-read, Wasserberg's head was up and listening, watching the actors inter-relate even when simply reading. Constantly exuding humbleness, in this rehearsal she stated, 'I made a mistake when I took that line out [from this draft]' (Field Notes, 2018, l.1039), in relation to the dramaturgy. The line – 'I'm not sorry for what I did and if I had been a guy no-one would've given a shit that it was a dolly in that car' (Bowen, 2018a, p.32) – was reinstated. This relates primarily to Cormack's journey arc: 'you're the one building this character' (Field Notes, 2018, l.1041), Wasserberg stated. Tylor had wanted the play's gender imbalance at the core of Bowen's concept to frame the rehearsal decisions in order to support the reinstating of the line.

As Wood and Tylor read Scene Six, they layered and snowballed from the previous week's work on this section. I observed their characters gaining vulnerability (a contrast from the previous 'macho' characterisation of week one) and they radiated a genuine care for one another, particularly after the event of the kiss, where two twenty-year olds work out how to articulate to love to each other. As a human being, I could not help being genuinely emotionally engaged with their exchange, being drawn into the moment of young love. As they re-played the scene, Wasserberg reminded the actors

not to play for results, as they'd only just had a re-drafted version of the script and she worried that they were pushing for a result too soon: 'concentrate on the lines, rather than being convincing actors!' (Field Notes, 2018, l.1055) she joked, meaningfully. Asking them again to play the scene, Wasserberg wanted a clear point of concentration, whereby the actors applied 'the given circumstances to the action' (Alfreds, 2010, p.183), and articulated their point of concentration as 'be[ing] aware that people could hear you and walk past' (Field Notes, 2018, l.1058). The characters are in a semi-public space and as the actors replayed the scene, they embodied the note, and internalised much of the previous externalised pain and anger:

> Yeah, that note helped the vast majority of scenes – being on a camp where anyone could walk past at any time, so obviously the stakes are a lot higher during Scene Six. But, also, I feel like everybody thought about that: that you could get caught doing this stuff, and could help in every scene. Even in the fight scene – you could get caught.
>
> That note was great and I remember doing it for the first time. Also, in Scene Four, getting changed and getting ready; being in that room. I remember shouting out "Keep your fucking voice down – we're good, we'll talk – Chill! Fuck!" That note helped everybody I think.
>
> (Wood, 2019, l.51-57)

They continued to connect to and with each other as actor/characters with a quieter intensity; the pace increased and the stakes of the scene – in terms of what is to be won (resolving the problem) – and what is to be lost – (their jobs if they were to be found out) – were naturally heightened. There was much more to lose for both characters if the two events of the scene (the attempted kiss of Cormack by Armstrong, and the fact that Cormack has slept with the offstage character McLeish) were to be discovered. From this, a collective rightness was felt; witnessing that the actors had a confidence following this run (as alluded to by Topolinski and Reber (2010), and

Wasserberg verified this with a simple reply of 'really good' (Field Notes, 2018, l.1066). This shared 'wow' moment was not the discovery of something new, but an alignment of the given circumstances alongside the playwright's intentions, with the directorial frames coalescing with the actor's embodied understanding of a moment.

6.2.4 GIDDINESS AND BANTER

During the early evening of day two, week four, there was a giddiness in the air; corpsing[42] was transpiring in rehearsals, as the company moved into its *performing* stage where,

> roles become flexible and functional, and group energy is channelled into the task. Structural issues have been resolved, and structure can now become supportive of task performance. This stage can be labelled as performing.
>
> (Tuckman, 1965, p.396)

Wasserberg's shrewdness in sensing how their natural giddiness at the end of a long working day could be channelled into the needs of the scene was immediate. She stated that 'I think the scene needs that energy; they've been up for 48 hours and are giddy' (Field Notes, 2018, l.1572-1573). Replaying Scene Seven, the actors kept the spirit of their natural giddiness and of the corpsing. The scene, which concentrates on shared stories of drunken behaviour, was suddenly alive, bright and effervescent. Through a collective rightness, Wasserberg wanted the spirit and *shade* of their natural energy to be captured. McNiff, whilst writing about art therapy and the need for participants to let go, writes about the leader (in this field, the director) working within their physical space: 'depth can never be planned in advance in terms of specific outcomes. We can prepare the space, but will never know what will appear' (McNiff, 2004, p.28) and,

[42] Corpsing is a theatrical colloquialism, describing when an actor inadvertently laughs.

> as a leader my primary functions are protection and inspiration. I keep the sanctuary and maintain the space for the participants. I set up the creative environment in which the process takes people where they need to go.
>
> (McNiff, 2004, p.23)

Wasserberg was alive to the possibilities that her creative environment afforded, and how these could be channelled into the scene, from what was happening in the moment of rehearsals.

6.2.5 'THAT'S IT, THAT'S IT'

The morning following the open dress rehearsal, where the production had first met its audience, saw the final major collective 'wow' moment occur. Wasserberg began the rehearsal by asking the actors to accept the cuts to the script as she stated that, 'you'll get used to your bits, but it's the nature of a new play [to make cuts]' (Field Notes, 2018, l.2024) as the piece was too long. Running at nearly two hours, Wasserberg needed it to play at ninety minutes, as per a contracted agreement with Sheffield Crucible on running times. A new script was issued (fifty-eight pages of dialogue instead of seventy-two) with major cuts, including Findlay's Scene Eleven monologue being completely removed, and any salient plot points required from that speech woven into the final Sands/Findlay interchange (now titled Scene Ten), and Sands's briefing monologue (Scene Six). Wasserberg's collaborative approach saw deputy stage manager Dawson giving the justifications for any cuts, as she read them out from the prompt book. The major 'wow' moment stemmed out of the impact that the cuts had on the pivotal inciting incident scene. In Scene Three, there was a significant cut from the section where the squaddies were waiting, prior to the main action; this was justified as there being too much colloquial banter. Dawson stated that 'we're cutting to differentiate between waiting around and [getting] the soldiers in conflict' (Field Notes, 2018, l.2033), as it was felt the

colloquialisms in the scene were diluting the tension needed to be generated.

The cast accepted the cuts, trusting directorial decisions without question as there was an implicit trust within this *performing* stage, as the company 'developed to the point where it can support rather than hinder task processes through the use of function-oriented roles' (Tuckman, 1965, p.390). Tamara Harvey, artistic director of Theatr Clwyd, North Wales, identifies that there is always work to be done on a text, as was happening in this rehearsal, stating that 'there's never a moment where you say "this is finished", you simply at some point let people in and the piece continues to grow and shift' (Harvey 2019: l.79). The inciting incident scene was being sharpened following the audience's reaction the previous night. It was felt that the scene was not generating enough tension, and dramaturg Craig identified that it needed trimming when sitting with an audience:

> In front of an audience I can see where the saggy bits and where the repetitions are. If you take out those mis-directions you can get that through-line you are looking for. It feels like the least creative part, and feels [more] like boiling the excess water from the pasta than adding new ingredients. At that point of the process it's very technical to me, rather than trying to change things. At that point we are stripping away and taking away anything that gets in the way of these emotional trajectories. We've taken out the kinks […] If you are looking for an escalation you have to take those repetitious elements out.
>
> (Craig, 2019, l.133)

The actors reworked Scene Three with the cuts (Figure 15). First technically reading it and running the lines several times for accuracy, they then re-teched the piece with the cuts in full costume, and with lighting and sound. Following this run-through there was 'reflection on action' (Schon, 1982, p.276), as opposed to in action during the scene, as actors consciously

articulated their awareness of the rightness of the run, and a 'wow' moment was observed. All of the component parts of this crucial scene finally coalesced, and a collective sense of rightness regarding the play's seminal scene had arrived, as verified by Wasserberg:

> Once we had our soundscape, our car, and the actors were in full kit, we realised we needed much less text and much more physical storytelling. The actors were absolute heroes, re-learning the very technical, difficult text and throwing themselves around the stage in the dark, wearing enormously heavy backpacks and carrying life-size imitation guns, while real fire exploded from the car, and I pushed them and pushed them to go faster.
>
> (Wasserberg, 2019a, l.168)

The drive and an energy resulting from the condensed scene, (which remained throughout the production, but did not make the printed script version), saw stakes raised, as there was less time for characters to contemplate and discuss the situation under fire. The actor/characters were working through their action centre, rather than their thought centres (Merlin, 2014, p.162), with characters working impulsively in action. Having fewer lines meant that the danger was palpable, as there was little time for characters to reflect, since the pressing issue of death from previous rehearsals was now firmly unleashed. Wasserberg had also physically placed Cormack behind the car and further away from the others. Being trapped between the car and the back wall of the theatre, there was nowhere for her to go and her life was now in definite danger.

Viewing this 'wow' was like a volcano eventually erupting, with collective cheers abounding. Wasserberg was smiling, sitting forward on the treads of the auditorium, the LX designer was beaming, Tylor shouted 'Yes!', and dramaturg Craig stated, 'That works' (Field Notes, 2018, l.2057), and went out to communicate this to Bowen. This scene was now felt to be *right*,

with clear, truthful, relative storytelling working within all frames of the piece as verified by Melville:

> This really changed the whole play, it felt far more exciting, out-of-control and chaotic. The energy was really infectious, the cuts were great, as the scene felt more direct and dangerous. It did feel right. The energy, the pace, the intentions, they all finally fell into place.
>
> (Melville, 2018, l.146-148)

Tylor describes the scene's first 'that's it' moment and relates it to the sense of truth Scene Three now embodied:

> That scene wasn't working rhythmically, that scene is about rhythm and speed and clarity, and I think it got lost, but that's to do with someone who didn't have time to rehearse […] I remember thinking [in that rehearsal] 'that's it… that's it'.
>
> (Tylor, 2019, l.148-151)

This outward expression of rightness is the articulation of a 'wow' moment. Rossmanith expresses this with clarity 'as a "feeling right" thing. There [is] a sense – in the very literal sense of "sense" – that the practitioner's "got it"' (Rossmanith, 2006, p.76). Achieving a balance of organic impulsive decisions, coupled with technically controlling the writing to explicitly make the scenes meaningful for the audience, were the key drivers in the accrual of this important 'wow' moment.

Figure 15: Re-teching Scene Three. The assistant director, left, holds her notes and checks the new cuts, as the actors in costume await a run-through.

6.3 SUMMARY

Chapter 6 concludes the narrative overview of selected parts of the data from the ethnographic observation of *Close Quarters*, and the account of the shared breakthroughs observed between individuals through Lens Three and the 'wow' moments through Lens Four. 'Wow' moments are redefined in this chapter not as random moments of 'aha', observed and described by the observer, but as those shared moments of breakthrough by the people being observed. Through a 'wow' moment a unification of many disparate entities including, but not exclusive to, writing, acting, direction, scenography and *mise-en-scène* coalesces in a shared moment of rightness, working within the *Close Quarters* production frames, generating the truth required by the moment. All participants were consciously aware of the breakthrough moments occurring for them after the event, as verified by the interviews. The breakthroughs above had meaning where they were related to the needs of the process and the production frames created from Wasserberg's interpretation, which in turn stems from the play's central ideas and questions, established by Bowen.

It is to the direct answering of the research questions that Chapter 7 now turns, drawing from the data analysis of Chapters 5 and 6, in order to posit findings and results.

CHAPTER 7: ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

7.0 ANSWERING THE QUESTIONS

Chapters 5 and 6 outlined how and when breakthrough moments viewed through the lenses occurred in the rehearsal period of *Close Quarters*. This penultimate chapter analyses common themes from the ethnographic data, in order to directly answer the research enquiry questions. Starting by answering the subsidiary questions, these then feed into responding to the main enquiry question of this thesis:

> **How do breakthroughs shape and inform the ongoing theatre-making process and the final production?**

The first subsidiary question to be examined is:

7.1 WHAT COUNTS AS A BREAKTHROUGH?

Primarily, a breakthrough in a rehearsal relates to an uncovering of something that is useful and moves the process forward, whether individually for the actor in relation to their character and their relationship to others, or more widely concerning the world of the play or the production. The *Oxford English Dictionary*'s definition of a breakthrough as 'a sudden advancement in knowledge, achievement etc; a development or discovery that removes an obstacle to process' (1989, II, p.517) is different to a discovery, defined as 'the action of discovering. Verb. 1. Find something unexpectedly in the course of a search' (1989, IV, p.753), which becomes somewhat problematic in the light of this research, as it presupposes that discoveries are unexpected things. There is, however, an expectation of discovery occurring in rehearsals, and often the knowledge is not new, or a sudden 'eureka'-like moment. 'Breakthrough' as an umbrella term that encompasses discoveries is therefore used to term the original method of analysis 'The Four Lenses of Breakthrough'. Using the term 'breakthrough'

does not therefore presuppose that it is unexpected, and there is an advancement in knowledge or achievement obtained viewing breakthroughs via moments that are observed through all of the lenses.

If a breakthrough, (whether small moment of recognition or major 'wow' moment), amounts to a moment of change for an individual or group of people, Figure 16 identifies that during the making of *Close Quarters* 33% of breakthroughs were viewed through Lens One, the individual recognition moments; 44% were the individual discovery moments of Lens Two; 14% were collective discoveries viewed through Lens Three; and only 9% viewed through Lens Four, as ensemble 'wow' moments. It is evident that being tacitly placed in the position of judging what counts as a breakthrough as a researcher, due to the paucity in the literature up to this stage, is of value, since Melrose has found that the 'focus and the orientation of Cultural and Performance Studies texts over recent decades has tended to be with cultural reception rather than with cultural production by expert practitioners' (Melrose, 2006, p.75). Moving to an analysis of production and choices made ensures that there is an additional method to examine breakthrough moments within theatre production.

As terminology is confused and interchangeable throughout the literature and in practice, the privilege of witnessing one rehearsal period allowed a case study approach to create a new framework, and sharpen the language used. As an ethnographic eyewitness, I had 'exceptional insider access to the company's work [and] the practical details of what happens in rehearsal but also the excitement, tensions and challenges' (Harvie and Lavender, 2010, p.1). Witnessing that breakthroughs were often made when individuals were solving problems, Synectics, as outlined in Chapter 2, was a useful point to return to; breakthroughs are made in relation to 'problem stating [and] problem solving' (Gordon, 1961, p.33). In the *Close Quarters* rehearsals, a problem was often stated verbally before a solution was sought, through employing rehearsal strategies to unlock an issue. At other times, the problems were implicitly stated in the director's or actor's mind,

prior to a solution being sought and a breakthrough made. For example, O'Reilly articulated that when working on her Scene Seven speech:

> I was doing too much entertaining, and it was too light. I think there's something powerful, when someone's telling you about something dangerous [and] you don't need to entertain. The speech is lean, with no excess words. It's so precise. You know when it's right or when it's off – and that's an internal thing, and it's experience too.
>
> (O'Reilly, 2018, l.48-51)

O'Reilly identified her own problem, as she did not feel right delivering her character's dangerous speech in Scene Seven using a 'light' tone that was not obvious in the rehearsal room and certainly was not explicitly discussed. By mentalising the problem, she found a solution by returning to the text, to ensure a new breakthrough in the moment was unlocked. This led to a breakthrough about a moment that unlocked a meaning encased in the text: a form of code-cracking.

7.2 WHEN MIGHT BREAKTHROUGHS OCCUR IN A REHEARSAL PROCESS?

The assistant director took the company through a daily series of physical and vocal warm-up exercises at the start of each rehearsal that allowed the actors to be 'tuned up' and ready for the main body of rehearsals. For Demidov, 'the warm-up is essential […] When iron has been heated, you can forge it' (Demidov, 2016, p.558). Certainly, the iron of the actors' bodies and voices was tuned as they entered into a creative state through the daily intensity of undertaking physical military training. During this crucial phase, actors moved physically and psychologically from their own world into a creative state, yet no breakthroughs manifested themselves from the twenty warm-ups of forty-five minutes in length witnessed.

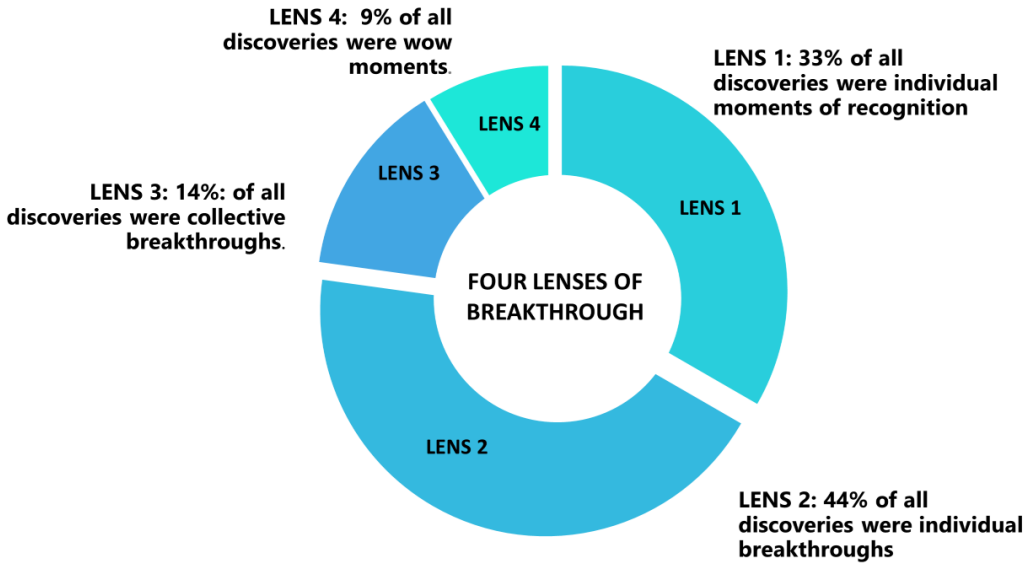


Figure 16: 'The Four Lenses of Breakthrough': the percentage viewed through each lens during *Close Quarters* rehearsals.

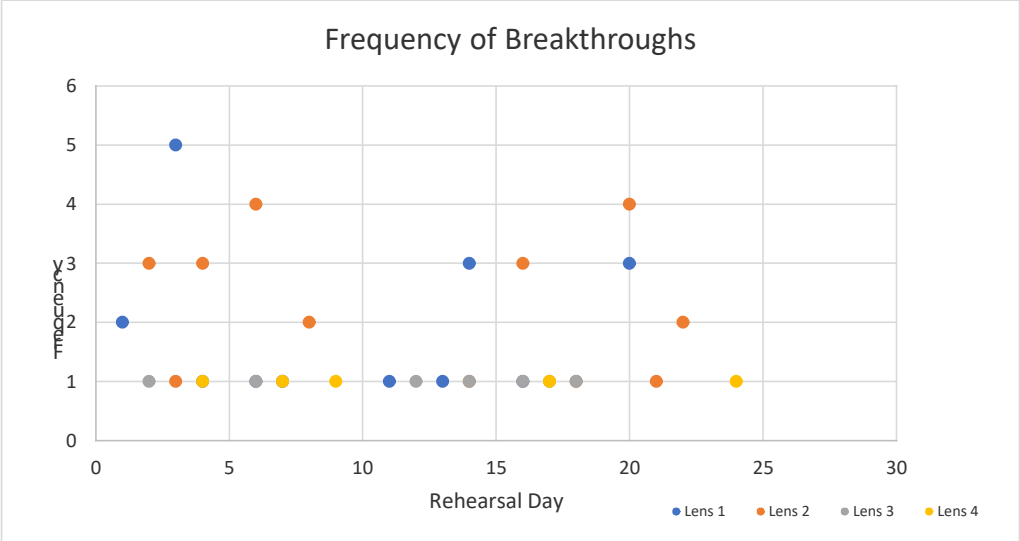


Figure 17: Frequency of breakthroughs, viewed through 'The Four Lenses of Breakthrough'.

Yet without this essential daily ritual, actors arguably would not be effectively moving into a creative state as a company. Building on Stanislavksi, Michael Chekhov's definition of this state as the 'Higher Ego' is useful as a definition. Actor-trainer Mark Monday clearly defines it as:

> a state in which the artist can work, in which the artist can abandon everyday life and commits to work in a creative place […]. It is a place beyond our everyday ego and is only attainable through imagination and fantasy life.
>
> (Monday, 2017, p.xiv)

The warm-up therefore allows for the actor to enter into a creative place in order to achieve breakthroughs by giving full concentration to the work and committing to the rehearsal. More often than not in *Close Quarters* (although this cannot be assumed for every rehearsal period), breakthroughs occurred for an actor when Wasserberg made them an offer. As referenced throughout Chapters 5 and 6, this was in the form of questioning, suggestions, quotation from the text, independent ideas, cue words or phrases, metaphors or sub-textual possibilities as Wasserberg 'motivates why' (Norrthon, 2019, p.177); the trigger for the actor to ask *why* the character may behave in a certain way, leading to a potential truth. For the director, Wasserberg's personal breakthroughs were often made in dialogue with an actor or a designer, where possibility generation and divergent thinking occurred, allowing new pathways to open up.

Returning to the literature on 'aha' moments, the directorial offers made by Wasserberg align to the concept of a facilitator offering 'cues' (Auble and Franks, 1978, p.428) to generate a recognition moment, as per Lens One, and using questioning techniques (Longhurst, 2010) which often led to discovery moments viewed through Lenses Two or Three. The 'wow' moments during rehearsal observation occurred following a run-through of a section or moment, or a sustained moment of activity working somatically on

their feet, rather than the actors undertaking any round-table mental reconnaissance work.

Breakthroughs manifested themselves when an actor began to personally discover as they embodied a directorial note within Wasserberg's relaxed rehearsal environment. Aware of the importance of a relaxed environment through my professional practice, where there is less tension, there is often more play and risk-taking. This is confirmed by actor Jonathan McGuiness (who has spent time in many rehearsal rooms including at the RSC, The Globe, and the Royal Court) who states that the

> ideal rehearsal is one in which the director creates an atmosphere where nobody is afraid to follow their instincts […] without being worried whether they are right or wrong […]. It's out of those moments that unique moments emerge, and those are the things specific to the rehearsal room, they aren't something that you can predict from working alone.
>
> (McGuiness, in Bessell, 2019, p.65)

For the actors in *Close Quarters*, a breakthrough moment often arose as they began to embody the character's circumstances and directorial notes. For the director, this was in relation to Wasserberg making sense of the overall arc of the story and/or sharpening a moment within her production that clarified a story beat for the audience. Again, this built out from the implicit or explicit realisation that there was a problem to be solved, or from the absence of a 'rightness'. This manifested itself when there was a sense of freedom created by the director who, in Wasserberg's case, is not controlling or despotic, but personifies a 'collaborative leader, who guides the creative work of an ensemble of equals' (Carnicke, 2019, p.5).

Theories of communication further support in helping to identify when a moment of discovery may be taking place. Transactional Analysis (TA), examines the ego states of human beings in relation to psychiatry and types of transactions made between people in group therapy sessions. Eric Berne

(1996) groups these into three types of personality who interact at any given moment: 1) the parent, 2) the adult, and 3) the child, (the exeropsychic, the neopsychic, and the archaeopsychic, respectively). In reality, a person may ask another person to do something as an actual adult, yet the response may be how a child, (in the sense of 'childlike', and not 'childish'), would address a parent. How we feel in a moment leads to these behavioural patterns. Many adult-to-adult transactions occurred in the Out of Joint rehearsal room between Wasserberg and her actors, as there was a collegiate rehearsal culture, as opposed to the process espoused by directors 'who stand aloof or who take themselves too seriously [and therefore] find it hard to require others to explore intimate, delicate and difficult feelings' (Hughes, 2011, p.17). If an interaction should ideally be 'adult' to 'adult' then, if an actor gives a 'child'-like response to a 'parental' director, this may not generate a meaningfully-shared breakthrough, since the actor is infantilised. If the director should 'construct ensemble-like conditions' (Innes and Shevtsova, 2009, p.180) for all those participating in the production, regardless of role, it is important that the director is attuned to an actor's sub-textual and non-verbal clues, as well as their interactions with others, in order to identify any potential problems, and address issues accordingly.

Using Ian Stewart's 1989 Transactional Analysis framework three important points can be applied to theatre-making processes. Firstly, Transactional Analysis examines *how* people 'say things' (Stewart, 1989, p.3) as opposed to *what* people say. Secondly, that the non-verbal communication is equally vital, and this may take place in a 'split second' (Stewart, 1989, p.3). Thirdly, and pertinent to the observation of interaction, is that communication exists at both social and psychological levels. The social level in a rehearsal room context could be related to 'text' and the psychological level to the 'subtext'. The psychological meaning may be present in the non-verbal communication which is 'always the real message' (Stewart, 1989, p.5). The actor's subtext in how they responded physically when relating to one another was observed through *Close Quarters*. Marrying this to the 'aha' literature of Chapter 2, moments of breakthrough

occurred during *Close Quarters* rehearsals physically in the split-second moment Stewart identifies. For example, in 5.2.3, observing a breakthrough moment for Tylor there was, as per Longhurst's 2010 study, a small pause before she replied. Following this, there was immense satisfaction as indicated by Csíkszentmihályi's 2013 study. These split-second non-verbal physical shifts (linked to Gordon's 'hot states', and physical changes following breakthroughs) were observed when a breakthrough took place. These also included the micro-gestures of movement of 6.1.2, when Melville and Wasserberg sat forward following their discovery, as well as Wood jumping in the air during his breakthrough in 6.1.6, plus actors punching the air, following a 'wow' moment, identified in 6.2.5. Observing when physical shifts occurred pointed towards a breakthrough that may have been happening for the participants, and this was verified through the interviews. Topolinski and Reber's 2010 study refers to a confidence, a fluency and a speed following a breakthrough event. Section 5.2.5 identified a confidence, not only in an actor's reply to the director following the breakthrough, but a confidence in their performance also when the scene was run again. There was also a fluency and speed in the breakthrough identified in 6.1.7 for Tylor, once she had made a breakthrough from Wasserberg's directorial offer. Tylor's ideas following this came thick and fast, with a fluency and confidence that made its way into her performance. Being alert to these non-verbal clues and physical shifts gives a researcher clues to the possibility of a breakthrough manifesting itself in a moment, which often lies in the sub-textual strata of rehearsal observation.

Implicitly sensing the 'wrongness' of a moment sometimes led to a breakthrough. O'Reilly in her interview returned several times to her interrogation speech of Scene Seven:

> In that speech I was doing too much entertaining and it was too light […] It depends on the intention, and if it elicits a response in the other character also. If it doesn't elicit the response, you go back to

> your actions and check what you're trying to do to the other person […] The rooting down [of that speech] came quite late in the process.
>
> (O'Reilly, 2018, l.48 -57)

Through the hunch of it not being 'right', synthesised with a directorial offer, and personal methods, such as re-examining transitive verb actions, O'Reilly (re)discovered a potential way of exploring this speech, and constructed a new approach through trial and error over a series of rehearsals, supporting the notion that hunches are useful in creative decision making, albeit distrusted in the sciences.

Often, breakthroughs occurred for actors in relation to sharpening their given circumstance; they began to 'give [themselves] up to the circumstances of [the] character's life' (Demidov, 2016, p.564). In many of the follow up interviews, actors verified that a breakthrough occurred when clarifying the circumstances:

> That note [that anyone could overhear conversations in the saw mill] was great and I remember doing it for the first time. Also, in Scene Four, getting changed and getting ready; being in that room. I remember shouting out "Keep your fucking voice down – we're good, we'll talk – Chill! Fuck!" That note helped everybody I think.
>
> (Wood, 2019, l.55-57)

Banton also verified that this breakthrough moment was of use, and alludes to the director being able to trigger a breakthrough through a concrete offer:

> Once [the director] told me [the circumstances of Scene Two], it just worked for me – it seemed to make a lot of sense, which I was really thankful for. I love it when directors do that.
>
> (Banton, 2018, l.55-57)

This supports the premise that breakthroughs can occur at any time. Shardow, who replaced the original actress, and who was not directly observed during rehearsals, stated that most of her breakthroughs took place during performances, and in a notes session, as she only had two sessions to rehearse prior to performance:

> MARSDEN: When did you make more discoveries? Was it when you were in front of an audience?
>
> SHARDOW: Oh my God, that was 100% my experience. And on the very last show with the last scene with Kathryn – we had this – one of the most amazing experiences of my acting career; it was like a brand-new scene between Sands and Findlay as characters.
>
> (Shardow, 2018, l.5-8)

Her training in Meisner[43] technique, whereby actors are tuned to be alive to immediate 'in the moment' experiences, aided Shardow's ability to engage in dynamic listening and breakthrough in the flow of the performance action, as opposed to the stop-start nature of rehearsals.

The major 'wow' moments of *Close Quarters* were few, sporadic and steady throughout the process. This was a genuine discovery, overturning the wrongly-held assumption that these may have occurred at the latter stages of rehearsals. However, during the early-to-middle stages of the rehearsals, more individual moments were viewed through Lenses One and Two. These individual breakthroughs reduced during the middle stages of rehearsal, and more collective breakthroughs occurred as actors communicated with each other more genuinely. With lines learnt, they began to place fuller concentration on their acting partner(s) in the scenes, as they

[43] Sanford Meisner (1905-1997) attempted to train students to live truthfully in each moment, mainly through exercises in repetition and direct repeat, asking his actors to dynamically and precisely listen to each given moment, especially to tonality.

built a characterisation within the rehearsal room frames established by the director.

Figure 17 suggests that from smaller individual moments the collective discoveries were unearthed, but it must not be automatically concluded that there is a sequential and linear pattern, moving from Lens One (recognition) to Lens Four ('wow'), in parallel with moving from content to form in rehearsal. Breakthroughs can occur with any member of the company, between each other, and with input from stage management and the wider creative team, as opposed to only the director, and at any time. For example, the discoveries for RC-Annie outlined in 6.1.3 identify that breakthroughs can happen at any time and to anyone, as RC-Annie 'are part of this mould that the directors have created [working] for the benefit of that vision' (Corbridge, in Bessell, 2019, p.116).

7.3 HOW, WHY, AND FOR WHOM MIGHT IT BE ASCERTAINED A BREAKTHROUGH IS MEANINGFUL?

As a researcher with a directorial background, a mindfulness to be 'more interested in the ways in which directors and performers are talking about their work than my own opinion of the creative merit of what it is they are doing' (Rossmanith, 2009, p.24) was integral. Cognisant of this, throughout the rehearsal process this meant examining how, why, and for whom the breakthroughs were meaningful, linking to Stewart's work on observing subtext (through tone and non-verbal communication), whilst not assuming that there was meaning attached until verification of the moment was ascertained.

The frame(s) of the production discussed in 4.6 house the choices being made through rehearsals. When breakthroughs align with these frames and are justified by the text (when examining text-based rehearsals) then a breakthrough can be ascertained to be meaningful:

> If there is a lack of communication about what these frames are, the actor then create[s] outside the parameters of the concept or even the play by allowing choices that do not fit the given circumstances or by not adhering to the arcs of action.
>
> (Monday, 2017, p.54)

Wasserberg introduced her frames to the company steadily, throughout the process, as and when required, as opposed to an extended first day talk, stating each frame and rule.

7.3.1 THE REJECTED BREAKTHROUGH

Throughout the *Close Quarters* rehearsals, many of the actors' breakthroughs were verified by the director when they sat within the frame of the production, ensuring a storytelling cohesiveness; those that were not necessarily of use were thereby rejected. However, this does not mean that the breakthrough did not have an effect on the process, or that it did not have an impact elsewhere. These I term the 'rejected breakthrough', where there is an advancement in knowledge in that moment in rehearsal and an initial obstacle is overcome. However, these breakthroughs do not sit within the 'frame' of the production and are not fore fronted by the director as a commensurate choice. It is clear throughout this thesis that the director verifies the choices made. Another example includes a moment in Week Two, Day Two, 'RC-Annie's Ruth asks, 'Does that work for you Kate?'. It does, as she replies 'yes' and the rehearsal moves on' (Field Notes, 2018, l.765-766). Below are two examples of 'rejected breakthroughs' from the rehearsal observations.

During the technical rehearsal, Banton recognised that he had had a personal breakthrough about his character, yet this specific moment which he embodied with a new choice of personal blocking was not verified by Wasserberg and did not manifest itself as an explicit moment in the final production. However, this was used implicitly by the actor elsewhere, thus

becoming a 'rejected breakthrough' that still had an effect on Banton's work. Quoting this section at length from the post-rehearsal interview with Banton exemplifies the amount of thinking and reflection on action an actor undertakes around such a moment, even if none of this is actually articulated at the time:

MARSDEN: There's something that happened in the technical rehearsal that never went into the final piece when you opened the door [for all the platoon to go out to fight, in an 'over the top' moment]. In the tech you had to wait longer by the door and you started to mutter something under your breath…

BANTON: Yeah, yeah, yeah…

MARSDEN: Were you saying a prayer?

BATON: Yeah, I was.

MARSDEN: Did it ever come back in during the run?

BANTON: No, it didn't.

MARSDEN: Was that a breakthrough or a moment of realisation?

BANTON: It definitely was a breakthrough. I found myself standing there not knowing what to do, but being simple, what would Adeyemi do in the situation? And the stakes are high. What are the rituals? But it's not said in the play what that ritual is. What is that? Adeyemi is religious and it's prayer – of course it is. I found myself putting myself into that and it felt right for me.

MARSDEN: Even though it didn't end up in the final piece, did this stay with you in a different way?

BANTON: Oh definitely, definitely. Even in the whistling there was something religious in the whistling. I was still thinking,

Adeyemi was thinking to that higher force and higher power – praying to it, and it's the whole thing. I was thinking that Adeyemi has lost countless friends and he doesn't know whether he'll make it out this time – to raise those stakes and keep those stakes high throughout.

MARSDEN: I didn't recall a conversation in the rehearsal room about the religious aspect?

BANTON: When I spoke to [Wasserberg] about [that moment] after that tech – she said it seemed I was trying to be invisible [when in prayer]. But I felt that there are some things so true to the character they don't need to be shown. Me not showing that on stage, or Kate not agreeing it in that scene doesn't mean it doesn't exist for the character and if it serves the play in that moment for me not to do that then I'm completely fine with it. We spoke very briefly before running it again [without the prayer].

(Banton, 2018, l.60-86)

Wasserberg had not felt Banton's breakthrough moment had a cohesive 'rightness', as it did not fit within the frame of the truth of the scene's moment, as she felt in the play's overall context the whole platoon needed to be seen to be unified as they were preparing to fight as a unit. For Banton this breakthrough, whilst not as meaningful for the production, was useful for his personal character development as he discusses above in relation to Adeyemi's religious background. In the final production, each character was heard whistling the melody to the folk song 'Over the Hills and Far Away' as a collective unit, prior to them leaving though the dock doors and going into combat. No-one was invisible or in their own world, (as Banton had been isolated by saying a silent prayer in the technical rehearsal observed), and

there was a collective moment. Whilst his embodied interpretation of the breakthrough did not explicitly map onto that moment and was rejected by Wasserberg as a choice for the overall production, Banton did not discard it, but applied it to his character's wider psychological profile, whilst also ensuing that the cohesiveness of the production's concept and writer's intention were honoured. This kernel of discovery was therefore transposed across Banton's overall individual approach to his characterisation. The interview with Banton continued to emphasise the underlying ambiguity that there is always something useful to be found, even if choices from certain breakthroughs do not make their way into the final piece:

> MARSDEN: When do you know something is "right"? Is it about the director verifying it in some way or inbuilt in you that it feels right?
>
> BANTON: […] You want the director to verify it, but you are your toughest critic and it must come from you. I think sometimes you know when you're doing right when an actor reacts to you as you're provoking them to do something – whether that's nothing or something – it's a reaction of some sort. It may not be right [for the immediate moment] but you're not wrong.
>
> (Banton, 2018, l.87)

A second example relates to O'Reilly's initial breakthrough as identified in 5.1.8, whereby her initial actioning of her Scene Seven speech with the assistant director led to a breakthrough at the time concentrating on Sands and her entertaining of the platoon (Figure 10). However, with the road-runner theory of rehearsal development in operation, by the final week of rehearsal the delivery had moved to one of informing. As outlined in 5.2.3 and 7.1, this came from Wasserberg rejecting the initial breakthrough through notes. Thus, something which was useful in the earlier part of rehearsals now became a 'rejected discovery'. Harvey states that 'in the

getting wrong we might find something more beautiful than anything you could find if trying all the time to get it right' (2019, l.47) which links to the concept that something 'which accidentally turns up shouldn't be discarded […] nothing ever turns up for no reason' (Demidov, 2016, p.587). Using the examples above, what was not necessarily meaningful for the director for these scenes became a) meaningful for Banton within the overall story arc of his character and b) an early breakthrough choice for O'Reilly in the content stage of rehearsal which was useful as an initial idea. Upon testing the efficacy of this choice later in rehearsal, it was rejected as the production moved from content stage to sharpening its form.

7.3.2 RULES, FRAMES AND RESTRICTIONS

Returning to Transactional Analysis, in a 1998 study surrounding the link between TA and rehearsal rooms, Stratos Constantinidis argues that 'any methods that can minimise interactional obstacles […] can also improve working conditions and artistic results' (Constantinidis, 1998, p.66). However, he was not arguing from a practical or ethnographic viewpoint, but a purely theoretical one, and drew heavily on two previous pieces of research, stating that further research needed to be undertaken in this area, due to the 'slow pace [of] empirical research' (Constantinidis, 1998, p.68). This study suggests that when a director works with restrictive approaches to interaction with their actors, there is a more 'productive' (Constantinidis, 1988, p.67) rehearsal process. Restrictive interaction relates to a director establishing firm and bounded frames for actors and creative teams to work within, and supports the need for creative restrictions, as time is limited in professional theatre in the United Kingdom (in the case of *Close Quarters* four weeks rehearsal, plus a technical rehearsal and production week prior to opening). Actors have to make significant advances during that period to be ready for opening night and it is essential that a rehearsal period is creatively fruitful. If the frames are in place, any breakthroughs can be tested against these frames, which supports Alfreds's 'big obsession': that of clarifying

> the rules of the game, the conventions of this unique world we're creating. For me, that's what rehearsals are all about – discovering what the rules are for this particular game we're going to play.
>
> (Alfreds, in Radosavljevic, 2013, p.184)

Returning to Fields's research that the 'intense pleasure of 'aha!' is associated not with the often extended process of grappling with a problem, but rather with the recognition of a solution' (Fields, 2011, l.1162), it is noted that breakthroughs became meaningful when a solution was found. For example, Tylor recognised one in the moment of finding a solution about why she says less and less throughout the play, as analysed in 5.2.3. This recognition was verified by Tylor as she expressed that 'some people can talk their way out of things, whereas for her it's that she didn't know what to say anymore – "I'm lost"' (Tylor, 2018, l.100). This moment was meaningful to Tylor, giving her a confidence to anchor her character arc through an understanding of a psychological given circumstance.

In relation to Wood's major breakthrough described in 6.1.6, this was meaningful for him personally due to the satisfaction expressed following it. It became meaningful for Wasserberg as she continued to push Wood towards embodying the line emphasis that Bowen had identified in the rehearsal draft, once she had discovered this herself. By looking at how this line was structured by Bowen, the reverse-engineering led to a rehearsal discovery meaningful for all those involved in the producing of that moment, and an intense pleasure for the individuals was observed.

7.4 WHAT LEVELS OF AWARENESS OF BREAKTHROUGH MOMENTS MIGHT PARTICIPANTS HAVE, BOTH DURING THE REHEARSAL PROCESS AND UPON REFLECTION?

This thesis proves that there are consistently high levels of awareness from actors as they oscillate between their real and dramatic versions of themselves. In this rehearsal process, no actor's character subsumed their

own personality, so they were unable to 'reflect on action' (Schon, 1982, p.276) following the event. Practitioners Hagen (1991) and Dodin (2009) wish for actors to be able to have an awareness of their process and articulate this.

A central spine of this thesis is the notion of interaction, namely between actors, and between actors and their director, in relation to the text, and the framework of Interaction Ritual Chains (IRC) described by Randall Collins (2004) is of use in supporting these findings. IRC is the theory of situations and encounters between human beings and has been previously explored in relation to theatre-making and rehearsals by McAuley (2010); who remains the only rehearsal scholar (at the time of writing this thesis) to combine IRC and rehearsal processes. In creating 'social memberships' (Collins, 2004, p.xi) these rituals create an emotional energy in individuals that gives them a self 'motivating effect' (Collins, 2004, p.38). Collins builds out from the work of sociologist Erving Goffman (1974), taking the viewpoint that situations 'make demands' (Collins, 2004, p.16) on a human being to interact with another, and argues that all interactions in some part 'constitute a ritual' (Collins, 2004, p.15).

Several salient points can be drawn from this in relation to rehearsals. Firstly, that a culture (in this case the Out of Joint collegiate rehearsal room environment) is 'generated by […] patterns of social interaction' (Collins, 2004, p.xi). Common social interaction rituals at play in rehearsals include warm-ups, notes sessions, working scenes round-table, and follow up discussions after a scene run. Each situation, according to Collins, creates a set of rituals and every person encountered 'creates an interaction ritual' (Collins, 2004, p.xiv). At the heart of IRC theory is that when groups form, there are shared events that lead to the collective effervescence seen at the centre of Figure 18 below, created by the shared awareness of a situation centred around a mutual focus of attention. This focus of attention observed in this study was a particular scene being rehearsed and/or a problem being unlocked. An example of this was Wood's desire to solve the moment

outlined in 6.1.6 as a self-motivating task, with a shared focus of attention and mood, and a solidarity between director, actor, assistant director and deputy stage manager, to break through a problem. This created an emotional energy, which gave the 'motivating effect' (Collins, 2004, p.38) on Wood, which is a positive experience further generating group solidarity.

Collins argues that group rituals create a sacred object and that 'new symbols can be created; whenever the group assembles and focuses its attention around an object that comes to embody their emotion, a new *sacred object* is born' (Collins, 2004, p.37). Mapping this onto a theatre-making process, McAuley states that this object is the final production which becomes the 'central symbol of the relationship that existed between them' (McAuley, 2012, p.220). Linked to flow as described in Chapter 2.2, IRC also relies on feedback to an individual, whereby they are then able to adapt their behaviour accordingly. Feedback to the individual in the case of the example above with Wood came from the directorial verification and his own reflexive capabilities. An equally 'central ingredient' (Collins, 2014, p.102) is that of emotional energy (EE), or 'effervescence' in Figure 18. A shared mood and energy is needed for a successful IRC, as it again provides a solidarity according to Collins, and this is the long-term result of a group membership moving from Tuckman's early 'storming' stage to eventually arriving at the 'performing' stage. If 'enthusiasm, joy [and] humour' (Collins, 2014, p.125) are also signifiers of a successful IRC, then this also resonates with the sense of joy following an 'aha' moment, as observed for Wood in his breakthrough detailed in 6.1.6. McAuley argues that EE is most strongly formed in rehearsal as opposed to performance, as demands on the actor during the days of performance (other work, auditions, or rest) dilutes the EE and that the 'emotional high created by good audience responses does not come near the experience of the rehearsal process' (McAuley, 2012, p.221).

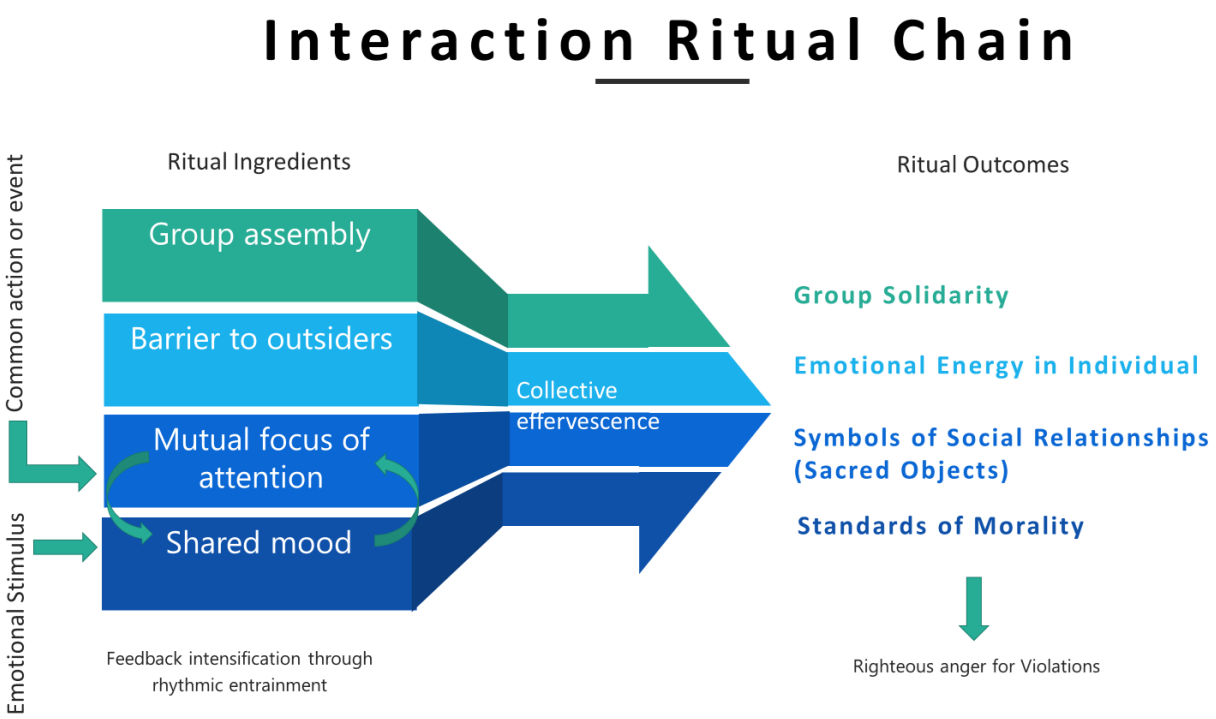


Figure 18: Collins' Interactional Ritual Chain (2004: 48)

This thesis has narrated several examples of the positive emotions generated by the company's leader Wasserberg that created an enabling ensemble rooted in her need to 'love' (Wasserberg, 2018, l.327) the play and her actors. Collins discusses the importance of a group leader's positivity acting as a catalyst for a group's collective energy:

> Frequently the positive emotions (joy, enthusiasm, humour) are generated by a group leader, an individual who takes the focus, who is able to propagate such a mood from his or her own stores of emotional energy. This individual thus serves very much like an electric battery for group emotional expressiveness.
>
> (Collins, 2004, p.125)

Linking this to McAuley's work, if actors genuinely make a meaningful contribution and are part of an ensemble process, then EE states increase as part of a 'status ritual [as opposed to a] power ritual' (McAuley, 2012, p.230). In a power ritual, there are more dictatorial approaches espoused by the group leader, which McAuley relates to the *auteur* director 'like Kantor or Wilson' (McAuley, 2012, p.230), whereas a status ritual is tacit and implicit between director and actors with a 'high level of collective effervescence, empowering the participants [actors], enhancing their sense of belonging and of the cultural value of their work' (McAuley, 2012, p.230). There is, for Susan Melrose, always a sense of joy in an 'aha' moment, 'where that joy is of the order of a striking discovery that is nonetheless commensurable with the medium or discipline at hand' (Melrose, 2006, p.77). Communication theories are therefore of use in supporting how rehearsals can be surveyed and the theoretical underpinning of the creative event, verifying observations.

7.5 HOW DO BREAKTHROUGHS SHAPE AND INFORM THE ONGOING THEATRE-MAKING PROCESS AND THE FINAL PRODUCTION?

Turning attention to the main research question, a breakthrough in rehearsal informs how actors (and directors) approach the next moment of a rehearsal, as Stern's 'finding' process unfolds in rehearsal, as

> actors are encouraged to make discoveries about the play (or make the director's discoveries about the play) […] The idea of 'finding' (rather than manifesting) a characterisation is one of the primary aims of rehearsal.
>
> (Stern, 2000, p.6)

Rehearsal is thereby 'a[n ongoing] process of embodiment' (Norrthon, 2019, p.172) to construct the appropriate characterisation where 'words should be spontaneous utterances that only they could say at that moment' (Alfreds, in Bessell, 2019, p.92). Breakthroughs are one ingredient that inform the actor's embodiment process, as an overall sense of a relative truth emerges, and the finding process snowballs. Actors move from a cerebral understanding as 'what is in the head […] move[s] to the body' (Wright, 2001, p.28), and embodied knowledge becomes 'articulated physically rather than verbally' (Rossmanith, 2009, p.36), as the actors experience things from moment to moment. The notion of *experiencing* concerns 'living the life of the human spirit' (Stanislavski, 2010, p.20) on the stage. Experiencing concerns actors being in the moment, reacting truthfully, and engaging with their character's situations. Breakthroughs are related to a merging of the actor and their character as embodying occurs, and therefore experiencing relates to marrying the inner life of the role with an external physicality, which (in turn) is communicated to an audience. Rossmanith in her rehearsal observations detailed that one actor observed 'felt a particular synthesis between dialogue and physical action [and] he recognised this as a moment of revelation' (Rossmanith, 2003, p.194). The revelation became a breakthrough for this actor. Stanislavski wished for actors to experience a role from the perspective of the character and therefore a breakthrough is verified not only from the directorial or conceptual frames, but by aligning whether the breakthrough is of use from

a character's perspective with the actor living within their given circumstances.

Carnicke (2009), along with Benedetti (2010), allows for practitioners and academics to reframe Stanislavski's practice and apply these philosophies and methodologies to the rehearsal room. Much work has gone into working around 'the Russian word "experiencing" (*perezhivanie*) [which is] the term [Stanislavski] chooses to describe what actors feel when the exercises completely release their full creative potentials' (Carnicke, 2009, p.129). The term 'experiencing' (the spiritual life of a role) is used, as opposed to 'living' a role, meaning a creative state is achieved with the merging of actor and character. This receives support from Vasili Toporkov writing on Stanislavski's rehearsal methods at the Moscow Art Theatre, where he reflects on the definition of 'experiencing' being that of 'genuine human behaviour […] which hook[s] an audience and influence[s] their hearts and minds' (Toporkov and Benedetti, 2008, p.115). Carnicke simplifies 'experiencing' as 'an actor's unbroken concentration on the events of the play in performance' (Carnicke, 2009, p.133). Experience thus relates to finding the truth within the imagined circumstances of the play and fully interacting with the life *on stage* (i.e. the world around them), as opposed to relating to an inner emotional truth linked to the practice of emotional memory.

Breakthroughs therefore shape and inform the next stages, as when one occurred during *Close Quarters,* it was clear that the process was able to move forward, or the director chose to 'test' the efficacy of the breakthrough by re-running a scene or bit. For Wasserberg, a breakthrough is:

> the moment where you glimpse the scaffolding of the universe. You look beyond what's happening and you see the grand plan beyond. We make stories to help give form and meaning to the world and a breakthrough happens when you sense that form and meaning.
>
> (Wasserberg, 2018, l.375-378)

The scaffolding of the universe is thereby the limit of the frame(s) created; it is exposed as it aligns to the choices made and breakthroughs achieved to create a form.

Returning to the five stages of breakthrough as discussed in Chapter 2.1 from Csíkszentmihályi (2013) of an 'aha' moment (preparation, incubation, insight, evaluation, and elaboration), it is clear that those stages were operating within the *Close Quarters* rehearsal process surrounding each breakthrough moment. By using Wood's 'aha' moment, examined in 6.1.6, to map onto Csíkszentmihályi's progressive framework, Figure 19, below, maps each stage onto both this, and the IRC model. This example demonstrates the 'asymmetric relationship between the director and the ensemble' (Norrthon, 2019, p.173), as there is a shared moment of discovery, and yet the frame was pre-decided: in this case by the writer's italics in the script, identified by the director. Breakthroughs are verified by the director.

Breakthroughs were also observed through the technical and dress rehearsals. These are the final stages that a production passes through, prior to being presented to an audience, yet they 'are seldom specifically addressed even in books about rehearsal, because they happen when much of the creative process is over […] and the performance to come is not shaped and developed by them' (Stern, 2000, p.8). Yet, as detailed in Chapter 5, (in relation to Wasserberg's breakthrough), and Chapter 6 (the 'wow' moment, following cuts) many discoveries were happening at this stage, and the final production was indeed shaped and informed by these breakthrough events. Therefore, being open to discoveries at this late stage is vital for the production's creative process, and the possibility of occurrence should not be stymied. Stern's premise that 'those [technical] periods are unlikely to have the "wow" moments' (Stern, 2018, p.60) is therefore refuted by this thesis, through the observation and analysis of this latter period.

If a production's performance is viewed as a 'continuation of the rehearsal process' (Stern, 2000, p.92), we therefore should view the technical and dress rehearsals as such, as opposed to not analysing these

periods, and assuming these are just a functional part of the process, merely bridging rehearsal to production. The stage between the formal rehearsal period and first night is to be considered as a continuation of the creative process, even though the focus of attention has shifted naturally onto concentrating on each element of the production world.

7.6 SUMMARY

Drawing on the above findings, this chapter proposes a syllogism to suggest how breakthroughs shape and inform the final production:

i. The codes of the text need to be 'cracked' by directors and designers prior to entering the rehearsal room (through discussions, workshop period) or indeed casting;
ii. This informs the creation of frames, or production rules. These frames give parameters for the creation of the world of the play as laid down by the directorial concept and design brief. Chris Johnston discusses 'framing' (Johnston, 2006, p.21) as a concept where 'the notion of the "frame" is like a container ship for the material, [allowing] you to know where you are in the process' (Johnston, 2006, p.20);
iii. The frames and the pre-decided world combined translate into a directorial vision (or concept), creating boundaries for actors, designers and stage management to work within (which may also include acting styles and conventions);
iv. The frames and the pre-decided world combined translate into a directorial vision (or concept), creating boundaries for actors, designers and stage management to work within (which may also include acting styles and conventions);
v. Individual moments of small recognition occur throughout the process. Actors come with prior knowledge of both play and (if a

pre-existing piece) the ghosts of previous productions, and they begin to align prior knowledge within the work of rehearsals;

vi. Individual and collective discoveries begin to take place when there is a 'rightness', as a breakthrough sits within the frames and experiencing occurs;

vii. Experiencing of these moments leads to embodiment, as actors somatically encode their knowledge and merge themselves with the words on the page to create a character;

viii. Finally, although 'wow' moments are few and far between, when they do occur they are felt like an earthquake through the company, as all individual moments that have been worked on coalesce and unify to create the relative truth required.

Therefore, all breakthrough moments are framed and congruent with the needs of the production and the directorial concept and emerge from a synthesis of work from within rehearsals, as well as the sub-rehearsal and prior preparation. Actor Antony Sher also believes that the possibilities for breakthroughs are not bounded by the rehearsal room itself. In his 2018 text, he identifies 'discovering Willy [Loman]'s monstrous side was a major breakthrough […] during rehearsals' (Sher, 2018, p.4). Yet on closer examination, this was related to Sher reading Arthur Miller's autobiography in the sub-rehearsal, in which Miller states that Loman was based on his Uncle who had an outrageous personality. When reading this, 'Willy stopped being a victim' (Sher, 2018, p.5) for Sher. The evidence from this study therefore points towards a *synthesis* of ideas from both within and outside of the rehearsal room as opposed to one lightning-bolt 'eureka' moment that becomes an elusive watershed moment to be sought for.

Preparation	There was a moment where the problem was identified and rehearsal focus converged to unlock an impasse. Preparation came from not only from Wood's own reflections, but directorial notes, cues, investigations and questions. Within the IRC there was a mutual focus of attention, a shared mood and a collective effervescence.
Incubation	Wood took these notes on board, reflecting in the moment and testing out emphasis on the individual words, manifesting itself, as per IRC, as an emotional energy.
Insight	The 'aha' discovery moment occurred as there was an awareness of the 'rightness' in the emphasis of the line.
Evaluation	A discussion between the director and actor took place, including verification, through both their verbal and nonverbal communication. Using the IRC model, there was strong eye contact, an enthusiastic vocal pattern, shared rhythms with one other, and confident enthusiastic facial expressions, which were all happening 'simultaneously' (Collins, 2004, p.139). Directorial verification became important as directors '"co-star" in almost every moment under investigation' (Crawford, 2015, p.45).
Elaboration	Testing whether this moment was valid came through the re-rehearsal of the scene and the verification from the director. This ensures that a rehearsal is 'never just the repetition of learned delivery, but on the creation of a performance' (Harvie and Lavender, 2010, p.1), through testing the efficacy of the insight through elaboration (in this case, re-running the scene).

Figure 19: Mapping Wood's breakthrough moment onto Csíkszentmihályi's breakthrough model and IRC.

Rehearsals are a snowballing process, and a 'rigorous rehearsal […] details, layer upon layer, the minuscule happenings that occur between the actors, which slowly coalesce' (Cortese, 2019, p.260). These 'happenings' include breakthroughs, which occur often and throughout the process, from pre-rehearsal, rehearsal, technical and dress stages and through performance. These breakthroughs, when ascertained to be meaningful, must then be woven and layered into the rehearsal process, shaping and informing the continued creative work.

CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSIONS AND FURTHER STEPS

8.0 INTRODUCTION

The final chapter builds out from the analytical findings in Chapter 7 and deepens the context for originality of the research and potential impact of this thesis. Presenting 'The Four Lenses of Breakthrough' as a formal method for observing rehearsal, this chapter (re)defines the lenses for rehearsal studies scholars to utilise in future research.

The implications of this study are framed as original findings which can impact on three main areas. Firstly, on theory; by presenting an original method of observation, theatre and rehearsal scholars have a framework for analysing rehearsal room breakthroughs. Secondly, the impact on practice is in ensuring actors and directors understand the importance of these ubiquitous moments and therefore, through a reverse-engineering of the findings, create atmospheres and rehearsal methods conducive for breakthroughs to occur. This can potentially inform and give weight to policy-change proposals, as current artistic directors look for ways to create more creative, friendly rehearsal rooms. Finally, an impact on the training of actors and directors is presented, including ways of supporting those in training, and enabling early-career practitioners to embrace thinking about, and approaches to, using breakthroughs.

The chapter also identifies certain limitations of the research, following reflection, including the inability to align any sub-rehearsal findings to the main rehearsal breakthroughs. Suggestions for further research opportunities that have arisen as a result of this thesis are presented as a direct result of addressing some of the limitations, prior to a final summary, which draws together the core themes of the study.

8.1 ORIGINALITY

This thesis sharpens and clarifies terminology and semantics that can be employed by practitioners and academics when analysing and discussing

breakthroughs, as opposed to the haphazard usage deployed throughout the extant literature. Through ethnographically observing others in action through *Close Quarters*, this thesis posits an original framework through which a rehearsal can be analysed. Reviewing the literature also highlighted the imprecise use of terminology including (but not limited to): 'discovery', 'recognition', 'rightness', 'inspiration', 'aha', 'breakthrough', 'lightbulb moment', 'that's it', and so forth. Sharpening what is actually happening in a breakthrough ensures that the waters are less muddy for practitioners and academics who wish to analyse this ubiquitous rehearsal moment, as it identifies that not all breakthroughs are of the same type. All of the *Close Quarters* breakthroughs were initially 'sensed, and rapidly – at least at their first moment of discovery – rather than "thought"' (Melrose, 2006, p.77). This original framework is 'The Four Lenses of Breakthrough', through which observers can analyse the types of breakthroughs, as summarised and presented in Figure 1.

8.1.1 LENS ONE: INDIVIDUAL MOMENTS OF RECOGNITION

These are the small moments of learning and insight viewed when an individual synthesises different pieces of information. For instance, when information from a director aligns with prior knowledge from an actor's individual pre-rehearsal study. This often becomes a confirmation of a moment, where there is a deeper understanding or a strengthening of something that the individual already knows but has lain dormant, and suddenly becomes more useful within the context of the production frame.

Observing *Close Quarters* through Lens One, it was clear that there were often clear moments of clarity and understanding through an ignition of (re)recognising a detail although it did not necessarily 'solve' anything overall. These are moments of learning which, according to constructivist theories of learning, associate 'new information with ideas already known, they [then] *assimilate* the new [information] into their existing knowledge

[…] scaffolded onto existing knowledge, skills and expectations' (Whitfield, 2020, p.19, original emphasis). Individuals thereby only become fully aware of a fact when *meaning* is attached to a moment.

8.1.2 LENS TWO: 'AHA' – AN INDIVIDUAL DISCOVERY MOMENT BY AN ACTOR OR DIRECTOR

Breakthroughs observed through Lens Two are classed as new discoveries and sometimes accrue from the smaller moments of learning that have formed through the stages witnessed through Lens One, although this is not a pre-requisite. This 'inspiration can be described in terms of a discovery: a dormant thought, feeling, or response suddenly re-emerges, preparing us to meet the world in all its turmoil' (Sidiropoulou, 2019, p.5). Observing a moment through Lens Two, a deeper understanding accrued, and new knowledge gained. Again, its usefulness was aligned to the needs of the production frame(s) and verified by the director. The closest Stanislavski gets to identifying an 'aha' moment is through his concept of 'inspiration' (Stanislavski, 2010, p.329), which cannot be forced or relied upon in Stanislavski's view. For inspiration to occur, the actor 'awakened it and prepared the ground for it' (Stanislavski, 2010, p.329). However, for an inspirational moment to occur, there needs to be a catalyst for Stanislavski, 'in the form of something impromptu, a detail, an action, a moment of genuine truth' (Benedetti, 2010, p.331), which could be a directorial note, or a re-visiting of a moment bridging ideas together.

8.1.3 LENS THREE: 'AHA' – A COLLECTIVE DISCOVERY MOMENT

This is, as in 8.1.2, a new discovery breakthrough, but one which manifests itself as a shared discovery between two or more people. For Wasserberg this is a moment of

> locking in, where the thing you all know in a cerebral and intellectual way is given breath and is alive. It's also where the space between two actors or more ignites with a truth.
>
> (Wasserberg, 2018a, l.382)

This thesis argues that this concept can be expanded to include the space between actor and director, as well as the space between designer, director, and actor. Truth is important here to benchmark against the efficacy of a breakthrough moment, which is defined relative to the needs of the play, the genre, and the production's frames. Both Lens One and Lens Two are also therefore verified when there is an external recognition of the usefulness of the discovery.

8.1.4 LENS FOUR: THE COLLECTIVE COMPANY 'WOW' MOMENT

Viewing a 'wow' moment through Lens Four occurred when all the individual and smaller multifarious strands coalesced into one, working within the production frame, and with any extraneous elements surplus to requirement either removed, or at least not foregrounded. This is the moment that van Hove describes as when the production arrives firmly at its destination; the 'wow' moment sees actors letting go, as 'effort is gone' (Demidov, 2016, p.533). A 'wow' moment could be described as when 'it all clicked and came together, when the spark occurred' (Stern, 2018, l.40). During this moment, actors are not working with conscious effort but there is a 'quality of ease' (Merlin, 2014, p.xiv) in an actor's performance, as they embody the cerebral notes and discoveries and connect to and with each other.

8.1.5 CRITICAL ATTENTION PAID TO BREAKTHROUGHS

As argued in Chapter 2, there is a paucity of texts explicitly examining the breakthrough phenomenon. There is also a lack of critical analysis within

the literature of breakthroughs, although the literature does allude to texts that describe moments of breakthrough. Experienced stage actors such as Sher does not describe in detail how the discovery moment came about, although his tacit awareness of this discovery supports the argument that there is importance attached to breakthrough moments in the creative process.

Whilst cognisant of wider rehearsal room methodologies and methods that lead to a moment of discovery, this thesis uniquely concentrates on the lead-up to the moment, as well the discovery moment itself, and its immediate and longer-term impact. Prior ethnographic rehearsal studies by McAuley (1998), Rossmanith (2008) and Crawford (2015) do not solely focus on this moment even though, as this thesis has identified, they have highlighted moments when they transpire. Similarly, other observational studies by outsiders (such as Selbourne, 2010 and Croall, 2014) have not been based in an academically recognised methodology, and are journalistic in tone, appealing to a broad reader base. Originality has therefore been the defining feature of this extensive ethnographic observation, verified by interviews, used to study breakthrough moments explicitly.

Through collating literature from the emerging field of rehearsal studies and aligning this to acting and directing texts, this thesis synthesises and consolidates many existing threads from passing textual references such as those of Sher (2004), to the extended rehearsal observations cited in Harvie and Lavender (2010). Given scant rehearsal studies research into 'what happens with the script when it becomes part of an interaction between actors' (Norrthon, 2019, p.173), this thesis builds a bridge between ethnographic practices and that of breakthrough moments. Section 8.4 below identifies possible areas for future research that could be undertaken in response to this study's findings.

8.2 IMPLICATIONS AND POTENTIAL IMPACT

Ethnographic rehearsal observation is certainly not a new methodology, but remains in its infancy. This thesis's claim to originality is the way in which it creates a new framework and a tangible method for observing rehearsals using ethnography as its core methodology. There are three areas towards which the study can contribute knowledge: theory, practice and education/training, and all three are intertwined.

8.2.1 THEORY

Rehearsal and theatre studies scholars may wish to absorb 'The Four Lenses of Breakthrough' into their work, as the framework posited by this thesis contributes an original method of observing and analysing rehearsal breakthroughs. As Edith Cassiers, Timmy De Laet and Luk van den Dries (2019) argue, the study of the creative process in theatre remains overlooked, and breakthrough moments form an integral part of the theatre-making process. Further ethnographic studies of breakthroughs would enable patterns to develop, deepen the findings of this case study and develop further theories, to draw new conclusions. Frameworks exist to critically analyse the final theatre production (such as Mark Fisher's 2015 *How to Write About Theatre*) as well as scripts themselves (including Robert Knoph's 2017 *Script Analysis for Theatre*), but few exist for the *analysis* of the theatre-making process itself, with the exceptions of Rossmanith (2003) and Proust (2008). A method that encourages specificity through which observation can be realised, counters the potential danger of 'seeing data everywhere and nowhere, gathering everything and nothing' (Charmaz and Mitchell, 2001, p.161) when undertaking a rehearsal observation and offers, in this case, specificity around the ubiquitous breakthrough moment.

8.2.2 PRACTICE

Actors need to be in a creative state for the occurrence of breakthroughs to occur. Generating conducive atmospheres for these moments to transpire is paramount in practice, in enabling a creative-friendly

space where risk-taking is celebrated. Creative possibilities can therefore be suggested by actors in order to build upon ideas and bridge concepts. Feeling safe to express these ideas, ask questions, and being able to articulate that they do not know all of the answers, are vital rehearsal room methodologies and philosophies of approach, to ensure a creative state.

As characters must eventually be embodied and owned by the actor (and not the director, who will leave, often after the first night), then the director must allow actors agency by utilising methods that act as triggers for this process. If a breakthrough removes a barrier to something which is an obstacle to understanding, then these discoveries and developments are of most value when owned by the actor, and not the director, as they are the artists who have to repeat performances over weeks, months and (sometimes) years. The thesis supports the notion that collegiate and enabling directors who make offers by asking trigger questions, using metaphors or stories as a vehicle to unlock an actor's creativity, allow for their actors to take ownership of the creative process. Directors, as the 'tone setters' of rehearsals and creative advances, are able – rather than infantilising actors – to use an adult-to-adult method of Transactional Analysis, triggering actors to embody ideas and concepts. Underpinning all of this is the importance for the director of an acute awareness in rehearsals recognising verbal and non-verbal signifiers when a breakthrough (especially the more subtle signifiers viewed through Lens One) is occurring. A director is then able to work in, with, through, and around the breakthrough moment with their actors for the benefit of the overall production. These implications (linked to the originality) of this thesis enable a deeper understanding of how decisions come about on the rehearsal room floor. Breakthrough moments occur often, and practitioners should be able to recognise one, unpack their component parts, ascertain their importance and test their efficacy.

Michelle Terry, current Artistic Director of The Globe Theatre, London, is one of several directors, including Harvey, who are changing the ways in which rehearsals are structured, and changing policies within their

organisations. A movement to construct rehearsal room times as parent- and carer-friendly, that is not starting too early in the morning, or having technical sessions that finish at midnight, for example, is shifting embryonically into the notion of being creative-friendly:

> The idea you have to be in a room to get that work done suddenly became a bit of dishonest gesture. Then you look at mental health, and you think, we are in London – it takes people at least an hour to get to work, you're asking people to travel at the busiest time of the day and then be creative on cue and be inspiring on cue. Suddenly you unpick systems that are just not creative-friendly.
>
> (Terry, 2019, l.221-225)

Recognising that the shift to create creative-friendly rehearsal processes is a financial one, in order to change policies, the thesis supports the need for change to include acknowledgement that the sub-rehearsal is also of vital importance, as is the time to consolidate ideas, as actors have agency on their creative process. A breakthrough moves the rehearsal process forward, and therefore being creative about how the process is constructed is an alternative way of approaching structuring rehearsals, as opposed to a simple blanket amount of hours to 'get the work done'. For example, if directors have stronger directorial frames from day one, and communicate these to their actors, time can be used effectively to work and make decisions within those frames.

8.2.3 EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Educational trainers and lecturers of actors and directors are able to use these findings to enable them to unpack discovery moments as integral building blocks within the creative theatre-making process. Through supporting students (auto-ethnographically) to reflect in and on action, trainee directors and actors can be taught skills in forming an awareness of a breakthrough moment, but also to be able to articulate its value, and test

this within the frames of the production implicitly or explicitly. For example, through the development of dual consciousness, actors are able to identify these moments, and directors can be trained to have an awareness of these moments as they occur. As Wasserberg states, '[Director] Terry Hands gave me the best bit of advice which was: "your job is to learn to see what you have, not what you thought you had, or you wished you have, but *what* you have'" (Wasserberg, 2018, l.98). The thesis also refutes any suggestion that there are few creative discoveries in the technical and dress rehearsal stages of discovery, arguing that these periods could be taught as both creative *and* functional stages of the rehearsal process. This is of importance due to the lack of formal director training within the United Kingdom. This research could be built into the explicit training of directors to avoid unnecessarily closing down discovery moments due to their importance in the ongoing process of the actor's embodiment of character and theatre-making. By teaching the importance of these moments, coupled with explorations of open mindset approaches, may allow future directors to embrace further possibilities and, therefore, creative and collectively owned solutions.

During my undergraduate teaching of directing in 2019, I piloted a project with Level 4 drama students observing Level 6 rehearsals, using 'The Four Lenses of Breakthrough', and examining what these were, how these came about (i.e. the triggers), and their impact on the rehearsal process. In discussion with the students, they articulated the value of this in relation to seeing how actors can bring about their own discoveries, rather than waiting for directorial suggestions. Although the feedback was anecdotal, I aim to extend this pedagogically, and with further research through using a formal quantitative methodological study to capture findings

8.3 LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

8.3.1 A GROUND- BREAKING PRODUCTION?

Unlike Brook's seminal production in Selbourne's account of *A Midsummer Night's Dream, Close Quarters* was not such a ground-breaking production, and therefore data may not be as impactful. It is unlikely that here will be less analysis of the play, the production, its cast and creatives and, consequently, it may not find itself as part of the theatrical canon. Reviews such as *The Stage's* lukewarm response, giving it three stars (out of five) noted ambivalently that the production 'features short bursts of movement between scenes in a not completely successful attempt to convey the intense physicality of the soldiers' day-to-day existence (Tripney, 2018b). However, Selbourne was not to know of how much of a game-changer for future directorial and design choices Brook's production was to be. Indeed, his account identifies how certain actors resisted Brook's vision for the play during rehearsals, which does not suggest they felt they were working on a seminal production, and that there was a lack of trust by some in the production's direction of travel.

Rossmanith and McAuley's rehearsal observations are not of seminal productions of the 20th and 21st Century; the value of this work lies in the undertaking of a sustained longitudinal observation and that data is gathered and that conclusions are drawn and posited from the case study. Returning to my proposition in Chapter 3, this thesis is one ethnographic case study, rather than a scientific experiment or multiple case study approach and so the 'seminal' nature of the piece should not be in question; this thesis draws conclusions from this one specific research study and does not aim to produce potentially highly generalised findings. However, through the synthesis of relevant literature and the specificity of this research, greater understanding is added to the field.

8.3.2 INTERVIEWS

Initially, the intention was to interview the actors daily, following the moments of breakthrough, perhaps fresh in their minds. Yet, this was impossible to achieve practically, as actors were called at different times, often leaving rehearsals in a hurry, as they commuted across London

throughout the first two weeks, and/or any interviewing of the actors would have to have been in parallel to a rehearsal needing to be observed. Privileged to be observing an intense working environment, it was therefore not feasible to add time to their already long days for extra discussions. Equity, the actors' union, dictates bounded working time regulations that do not allow for subsidiary work (such as interviews) to take place in breaks or lunchtimes[44]. As this study was not an experiment, the compromise became to undertake a final, extended, semi-structured interview, through which all of the breakthrough moments witnessed were discussed, as well as allowing actors to describe any breakthroughs occurred that may not have been witnessed. The time between the end of rehearsals and the interviews undertaken (of which questions and moments had been sent in advance) meant that actors had prior time to reflect, albeit that the time between was not always equal. A pragmatic solution was achieved without compromising the need for verification.

8.4 SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

8.4.1 CONDUCIVE REHEARSAL ROOMS FOR BREAKTHROUGHS

One area for future research linked to implications and potential impact above, is to reverse-engineer the outcomes of this research, so that directors and theatre-makers could potentially create rehearsal environments conducive for breakthroughs to occur. This continues to challenge the statement that 'no one can learn how to make a good rehearsal atmosphere or predict how an actor will make a breakthrough' (Trevis, in Manful, 1999, p.103) as this thesis goes some way to presenting how these come about. If Gordon, writing about creativity through his work on Synectics, states that 'play generates energy for problem solving and to evoke new viewpoints' (Gordon, 1961, p.119), then learning how to create playful and open

[44]All Equity rates, rules and working times are to be found here: https://www.equity.org.uk/at-work/rates-agreements/

environments through which individuals would discover, would be of value. Johnston warns that this playful 'attitude and spirit' (Johnston, 2006, p.150) needs to be brought to a rehearsal room as it 'underpins everything' (Johnston, 2006, p.150), as play allows for associations to be formed, 'apparently irrelevant to the problem at hand' (Gordon, 1961, p.120).

Breakthroughs take place naturally, which is a different premise from that of 'discovery junkeyism' outlined above by auteur director Katie Mitchell. As actors have to embody their character with agency, then an atmosphere of play needs to be conducive to generate a safe space for risk-taking, letting go, and the possibility of discovery and ownership. Rea suggests that the job of the director 'is to create an environment where everyone feels safe to be dangerous, or where they can feel comfortable with being uncomfortable' (Rea, 2015, l.113). Therefore, further research exploring how rehearsal methods are specifically chosen, created and used to provide this environment could be of value. Rehearsal strategies abound in texts concentrating on the *what* of rehearsals, from actioning through to creating the world of the play and, as seen in Chapter 2, the *how* is often secondary to the *what* throughout the literature. Further research into these elements could also include the quality of the rehearsal rooms, temperature, layout and atmosphere (building on Filmer's work discussed in Chapter 4), as well as how directors can create opportunities for breakthroughs, such as those witnessed in this study, including Socratic questioning techniques, whereby directors become 'artistic leader[s] of a collaborative ensemble of actors' (Carnicke, 2019, p.7). This research could potentially be autoethnographic in nature for practitioners using a structured Practice-as-Research methodology. Therefore, as the 'tone setters' of rehearsals, it is necessary for directors (both professional and in training) to understand these elements of rehearsals to impact on their practice.

8.4.2 SUB-REHEARSAL RESEARCH

Crawford's notion of the sub-rehearsal, which has been threaded throughout this thesis, could be further explored in relation to breakthrough

moments. Chapters 5 and 6 outline how some of the breakthrough moments were verified from an actor aligning their rehearsal room work with that of sub-rehearsal work such as research, textual analysis, or reflecting on action. Although not witnessed in the ethnographic study, Melville articulated how she accidentally tried on one of the backpacks when they arrived, which led to a sub-rehearsal discovery:

> that was my first discovery. How addictive being in combat is, how the adrenaline is like no other […] how insane the training is, how little sleep they get, HOW HEAVY THE BAGS ARE!!!! How heavy the guns are!!! How heavy the helmets are. HOW HOT THE UNIFORM IS.
>
> (Melville, 2018, l.38-42, her emphasis).

O'Reilly similarly discussed the importance of costume, as she had a breakthrough when her shoes arrived, another moment not witnessed directly but occurred outside of the room:

> I remember when my boots turned up, I was so pleased. Footwear makes you walk differently – how robust they are. These things that create a little shift in you. Someone said in my research that they were proud of putting on their uniform.
>
> (O'Reilly, 2018, l.41-43)

Further research substantiated using a formal methodology; tracking actors not only in the rehearsal room, but in the sub-rehearsal could therefore be of value. These moments could include collecting data on their pre-rehearsal research and preparation, ongoing rehearsal work, and further research, as well as moments such as Melville and O'Reilly's above, in breaks, lunchtimes and post-rehearsal drinks, as actors and directors discuss, reflect upon and consolidate their rehearsal work. These are the periods which 'the ethnographic model doesn't get at: the observer can't go home with the actor' (McAuley, 2019, l.63). Using actors as researcher-participants, by

employing autoethnographic approaches, could be taken into account, as even the actor's first private read through of their text

> should be undertaken with [a] a level of anticipation and excitement. Merlin […] encourage[s] us to enjoy a first encounter with the text, story and character: the character we are about to inhabit, the character whose energies we will allow to penetrate our incarnate selves.
>
> (Harrison, 2019, p.3)

Therefore, the actor's first encounter with the play would begin this particular piece of research, supporting Sher's (2018) notion that rehearsals begin for an actor long before any physical encounter in the rehearsal room.

8.4.3 EXPANDING THE FIELD OF ENQUIRY

Whilst this thesis has concentrated on the interaction between actor, director and text within a traditional rehearsal period, there are areas of the overall theatre-making process that impact on discoveries. As discussed in Chapter 3, I was allowed as a researcher to concentrate on the actors, directors, dramaturg, designer and fight directors as agreed by Out of Joint and concentrate in the findings on when these members of the creative team impacted on the director or actor's breakthrough moments and are therefore naturally fore fronted throughout. Nevertheless, there is scope to undertake a wider ethnographic study which can include all members of the production team, including musicians, all stage management, intimacy co-ordinators, dialect/vocal coaches and so on. This would need ethical consent from the outset yet would be a natural development in examining rehearsal room breakthroughs.

Linked to this (and as referred to in 1.1, 3.1 and 8.3.1. above), this is a case study approach and as such cannot be used to assume this occurs in every rehearsal room. Nor can it be assumed that this model can be mapped onto other rehearsal structures, such as devised processes, dance or music rehearsals. What can be utilised is the spirit of the approach to the research

and ethnographic studies of other rehearsal process would aid in the continual development of the study of rehearsal breakthroughs, and allow for a synthesis of findings from across a number of studies.

8.5 A FINAL SUMMARY

The heart of this thesis supports the premise that 'all acting is embodied [whereby the] actor uses his or her body to communicate meaning to an audience' (Kemp, 2010, p.186) and Callery suggests that 'to truly understand a play is to discover it through embodiment' (Callery, 2015, p.xi). Therefore, a rehearsal process is 'not a linear development' (Norrthon, 2019, p.182) as embodiment is not a logical, linear process. The breakthroughs observed through the lenses always linked to a gradual embodiment of ideas and text, although not in linear trajectory, as Figure 17 identifies. Observing the unpredictable nature of rehearsal breakthroughs through the four lenses did not occur as presupposed, from numerous small moments, to recognition viewed through Lens One, to many moments of 'wow', viewed through Lens Four, as opening night approached.

Breakthroughs for an actor are linked to moments of embodiment through a Stanislavskian experiencing and how an 'actor discovers [relative] "truth" in performance' (Kemp, 2010, p.18). An actor therefore 'embodies [the text] giving life to what has been written on lifeless paper in lifeless ink' (Demidov, 2016, p.565) in different ways at different stages. Any presumptions of the actor merging with a character in a linear manner should be struck from the language of acting and directing. It is worth noting that 'it is not surprising that most of the accounts of rehearsal […] have been written by insiders [but] an outsider may see things that familiarity has rendered unremarkable to the insider' (McAuley 2012, p.7). During day one of week three of my observations, the assistant director during the dinner break jokingly asked me 'who else are you spying on' (Field Notes, 2018, l.1153), using language suggestive of a covert operation, which reinforces

the superstition that surrounds the theatrical profession. As the assistant director is an emerging artist, it is interesting to note that she embodied the mysticism that surrounds rehearsal and that this continues within contemporary theatre practice or reflects a suspicion of academic research into theatre-making.

The layers that actors construct to fully embody these moments are personal and, in their nature, full of non-sequiturs, and breakthrough moments form just one part of this process. Therefore, it is impossible for a 'eureka' moment to land, whereby 'someone is suddenly struck by an idea that materialises from nowhere' (Brandt and Eagleman, 2017, p.45). The assumption that a 'lightbulb' moment of genius occurs mysteriously and magically in a rehearsal period is a fundamental misconception, to be challenged in future rehearsal and theatre studies, supporting Di Trevis' proposition that,

> one day the actors are slogging workman-like through lines, trying first one idea and then another. Without warning something changes – a quality, an atmosphere, an echo in the memory. These moments of breakthrough, of intuition, of clashing temperament and easy laughter are indefinable and at the core of the rehearsal experience, and the time it takes to happen – indeed to happen – is entirely unpredictable.
>
> (Trevis, 2012, p.60)

Breakthrough moments do occur and, as this thesis argues through the rehearsal observation of *Close Quarters*, they are indeed unpredictable. Breakthroughs occur regularly, but continue to remain somewhat elusive as to when they manifest themselves. This study, however, refutes Trevis's claim that they are *entirely* unpredictable, as many of the actor breakthroughs observed occurred following a specific a directorial offer. Mystery should neither surround breakthrough moments or rehearsal room work as research into these areas continues. Cassiers, De Laet and van den

Dries maintain that the creative process still remains 'a largely overlooked aspect of theatrical practice' (Cassiers, De Laet and van den Dries, 2019, p.33) and this study forms part of a counter-movement, ensuring rehearsals are not overlooked. Rehearsal breakthroughs should be studied as part of theatre studies, adding not only to the scholar's understanding of the genesis of the final production, but for practitioners to identify a breakthrough's place and value in the creative process.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: *CLOSE QUARTERS* FULL PLAY SYNOPSIS

As a memory play, *Close Quarters* opens in the near future, with the first of four soliloquies using a **Prologue**, where we hear Major Findlay in 2032 talking about how she started in the British Infantry as a Private working on patrol on the Estonian border. Introducing the characters, the Prologue sets up Findlay's close relationship with her childhood friend Alison Cormack (with whom she grew up, from the age of 10, in Greenock, Scotland) as well as introducing fellow privates Scottish Brian Armstrong and Welsh Clare Davies. The play tells the story of how this first generation of female soldiers to serve in the infantry in Britain deal with this historical shift in British Army. The framing device of a memory play is clearly established.

Scene One (17th August 2022- 16.00) We learn of the four new Privates, their relationships and backstories in this exposition scene. Captain Anna Sands and Sergeant John Adeyemi reveal to the Squad that they are to have their first live mission, a night-time reconnaissance to investigate military activity on the Estonian/Russian border. We learn of Private McLeish, referred to but never seen. He has been hiding Cormack's possessions and, with other men in the platoon, oppressing the new female members. We sense that there is a history between McLeish and Cormack.

Scene Two (17th August 17.00) takes us through a patrol rehearsal. Sands holds Findlay back at the end of the rehearsal, wanting to plant the seed that, due to Findlay's intelligence, she should be training at Sandhurst to become an Officer. Following this discussion, Sands converses with Sergeant Adeyemi, regarding the issues between the men and the women in the platoon, as well as Sands giving her opinion on whether the women should be on the front line at all, suggesting their bodies are not fully capable of undertaking the job.

Scene Three (17th August 23.45) is the turning point in the play and carries the main inciting incident. Upon what should be a routine patrol in a forested area near the border, we experience Findlay, Cormack, Davies and

Armstrong caught in a trap. Seeing a car in the forest with the sound of a baby crying, Cormack goes to rescue the baby but soon finds out it's a doll. Coming under fire from over the Russian border, they manage to escape the clearing.

Scene Four (18th August 08.00) is the aftermath: tensions are high between the four Privates. Cormack is distraught that she fell for the Russian trap, Findlay tries to say that there really *could* have been a baby, and that they should stick together. Davies, meanwhile, is apoplectic with rage at the situation, and Armstrong is attempting to make sense of it. Underneath the tension, we can see how close the four are, as there are moments of humour, and stories of the past shared to break tension.

Scene Five (18th August 09.00) takes us into four interrogations of the events of Scene Three with Captain Sands. These are interwoven structurally within the scene. Asking Findlay to stay after their interrogation, Captain Sands again pushes her to train to become an officer. In her second soliloquy, Findlay informs the audience (from the 'present' of 2032) that although she believed the shooter to be military, the Russians issued propaganda that a farmer had been shot, and that meant tensions on the border escalating.

A briefing of the platoon's manoeuvres, from both Sands and Adeyemi, opens **Scene Six (18th August 23.00)**. Once these are over, Armstrong attempts to cheer up Cormack, still upset that her actions have led to this crisis. We find out that Armstrong has been attracted to Cormack and attempts to kiss her. An argument escalates in which we learn that Cormack slept with McLeish prior to them joining the same platoon; Armstrong remains hurt due to this event.

Scene Seven (19th August) 01.00am sees the squad getting ready for the evening patrol. There's an evident tension, yet this is diluted as several stories emerge. Armstrong recounts the tale of himself, Cormack and other members of the platoon on a drunken night out, Adeyemi shares a drunken

story of himself after a night out in Mombasa, and Captain Sands recounts the story of how she began on her journey to Captain. Tension creeps back in at the end of the scene as they have to 'hold off' manoeuvres for a number of hours.

Scene Eight (19th August 02.30) is a crucial scene for the old friends Findlay and Cormack. Beginning with chatter about their past in Scotland, the scene quickly tips into long-held thoughts and feelings being released. Cormack revealing she's not ashamed of her past actions and who she is; Findlay reveals she's changed: out of necessity – as a woman and as a woman of colour. This leads to a physical fight on the rooftop of the accommodation block.

Scene Nine (19th August 07.30) sees the squad about to depart on their mission. Adeyemi is mortified that Cormack and Findlay have been fighting as he did not want comeback on the female division, since he has been 'telling the world they are a bunch of top-notch soldiers' (Bowen 2018b: 60). Letting them off, the four show moments of tenderness as they go off onto their mission: to protect the Estonian people on the contested border at this time of heightened tension.

Scene Ten (19th August 09.30) sees Davies, Armstrong and Findlay escape under Russian fire, yet Cormack has been directly targeted: hit in the carotid artery whilst protecting Armstrong. Was it armed Estonian militia or was she targeted by a Russian military soldier? The audience are not party to this, nor does Findlay provide the answer in her third soliloquy [45].

Captain Sands and Private Findlay have a tense interchange two days later in **Scene 11 (21st August 09.00).** Sands is leaving for a new mission, and after hammering home the inequity of the situation (even the provided backpacks and pants are male), she leaves Findlay her number, to tempt her into an officer's route.

[45] This soliloquy was cut after the dress rehearsal to reduce the playing time.

The final soliloquy forms **Scene 12** and the play's conclusion. Findlay reveals that she did enter Sandhurst and now, in 2032, is a Major in the army. Cormack's memory and legacy lives on through Findlay, and her legacy remains with Findlay as she commands new female Privates in her troops. As a black female in the Army, she has won 'against the odds' (Bowen 2018b: 72)

APPENDIX B: ETHICAL CONSENT FORM

INFORMATION TO ACCOMPANY THE ETHICAL CONSENT FORM

The researcher, Robert Marsden, is undertaking a rehearsal observation[46] of Out of Joint's *Close Quarters* which forms part of both his commissioned book for Bloomsbury ('Inside the Rehearsal Room' - 2020 Publication) and his PhD research into rehearsals undertaken at Wolverhampton University.

As part of this, he is examining the rehearsal room dynamics of the production of a text-based play. This will predominately be exploring the relationship between the actor, the director and the text on the rehearsal room floor. *Close Quarters* observation is at the heart of this research.

The researcher may ask to undertake follow-up questions with the director, actors and other creative team members involved.

Permission may be asked for any documentation to be photographed to bring Robert Marsden's observations and ideas together with 'rehearsal documentation'. This may be a page of the actor's scripts, or a section of any directorial notebook.

NOTES:

1. You retain the right to withdraw from the research at any time without harm or risk of prejudice.
2. All of your returned forms will be printed (if sent by email, your email will be deleted) and then kept in a locked filing cabinet at Staffordshire University in Robert Marsden's office. Your privacy and data will be protected.
3. The data you supply will remain your copyright.
4. Any audio or recorded data will be destroyed following the write up of the PhD and Book Publication
5. You will be able to read the final PhD study and Book Chapter and ensure that you are happy with the representation of yourself, your actions and words.

For further questions at any stage, or to change your commitment to the research, please email:

Robert Marsden

Associate Professor of Acting and Directing

[46] Using an ethnographic research method.

ETHICAL CONSENT FORM- Rehearsal Observations

(To accompany information sheet above)

Name:

Role within *Close Quarters*:

Contact Telephone:

Contact email:

Relationship to Researcher (if any):

Please Circle or Tick the below:

I hereby acknowledge that I have received and read the information regarding the object of the study:

YES NO

Do you consent to your name being used in the study?

YES NO

If NO, please state that you are happy to remain anonymous?

YES NO

You are aware that you can withdraw from the project at any time?

YES NO

You are aware that you can change your involvement (i.e. become anonymous) at any time?

YES NO

Signed_____

Date_____

APPENDIX C: ETHICAL CONSENT APPROVAL DOCUMENTATION

Faculty of Arts: Ethics Committee
George Wallis Building
Wulfruna Street
Wolverhampton
WV1 1DT

08/02/2017

Ethics Approval Application Number: 116667

Researcher: Robert James Marsden

Supervisor: Dr Ross Prior

Title of Research. Breakthroughs and Discovery in Theatre Rehearsals

Dear Robert

The Faculty of Arts Ethics Committee has reached a decision on your application for ethical approval.

The Committee is satisfied that you have addressed the ethical issues raised by your proposed research. We can therefore approve your application for ethical approval.

Please note that this approval is only in regard to the ethical issues that relate to your project and is not an evaluation of other aspects of your research project. If during the course of your research you make any major changes in your methodology and/or data collection, you may well have to make a new application for ethical approval. If you are unsure, then do not hesitate to contact the Chair of the Ethics Committee.

Please ensure that you are familiar with the latest guidelines on recruiting research participants and data security. The details for this can be found on the Ethics Guidance pages of the Research Policy Unit. http://www.wlv.ac.uk/research/about-our-research/policies-and-ethics/ethics-guidance/

We wish you the very best in your research.

Chair of the Faculty of Arts Ethics Committee

MK507, George Wallis Building